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THE PRELUDES TO CONVERSION IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

PSYCHOLOGICALLY CONVERSION presupposes certain attitudes of mind, dispositions, and processes. Viewed supernaturally it is naught else but the mystery of grace. But if considered on a philosophical basis, conversion is mainly concerned with the establishment of the proper balance between faith and reason. Throughout the writings of St. Augustine, the relation between faith and reason constantly reappears as one of the capital issues of his life. And when once he had convinced himself that religious belief and the abdication of reason were not synonymous he had taken the most decisive forward step in the evolution of his synthesis.

As a consequence, what St. Augustine wrote on the relation between faith and reason was largely the product of his own experience. M. Gilson affirms that Augustine's doctrine never separated itself from his conversion.¹ For fifteen years he had tried to conquer truth by the all-out attack of reason alone, only to learn that in the end he understood more by faith.² And it was because the whole problem of living was found to decrease in complication as the man increased in faith that Augustine wrote his famous: "Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis."³

Unless you believe you will not understand. This, at any rate, was his own experience. One may wonder how valid a generalization of the process of faith based on one man's experience may be. If, for example, Augustine had been a cradle-catholic who had never lost the Faith, or who had never known the bitterness and futility of a vain pursuit of truth outside the Church, would he have arrived at the same conclusion? Certainly there is no evidence of a struggle in the case of St. Thomas. Truth seemed to be the natural climate of his soul.⁴ Not so with Augustine, intellectual and moral difficulties he had in abundance. It was only by the supreme effort of the will, by the act of faith, that he was ultimately able to smash through the defenses of his own rationalism to enjoy the expansive peace of soul that comes with the conscious possession of the truth.

¹ "La doctrine d'Augustin reste par excellence la métaphysique de la conversion." Gilson, *Introduction à l'Etude de Saint Augustin*. (Paris: Vrin, 1931), p. 29.

² "Plus adhuc fide concepi, quam ratione comprehendi." *Contra Acad.*, II, 2.

³ *Isaias*, VII, 9. The Vulgate renders it: "Nisi credideritis, non permanebitis."

⁴ Gilson, "L'Idée de la Philosophie chez SS. Augustin et Thomas d'Aquin," *Acta Hebdomadae Augustinianae-Thomisticae*. (Rome: Marietti, 1931), p. 76.

Nevertheless, in spite of the great emphasis placed on the moral aspects of conversion, on the will and on the acceptance of God's grace, Augustine never minimized the importance of the intellect. "Intellectum valde ama" was not a chance phrase written by the saint merely for the pleasure of the moment. He meant it and he assures us that the proper use of the intellect constitutes an integral part of every conversion.

I.

FAITH AND REASON

Granted for the moment that faith and reason enter into the process of conversion, to which of the two should we give the primacy? Among the early reformers, the belief that human nature had been hopelessly perverted by the Fall led to the assumption that the intellect had become vitiated as an instrument for the attainment of truth. Faith was emphasized at the expense of reason. The reaction was not long in setting in. In our own day pragmatism and materialism have gone to the opposite extreme. They have no creed unless it be to have faith only in unfaith, to believe only in reason. The Manicheans were of the same house and family as the current rationalists: There is no God; Man is a prophet unto himself.

The popular idea of what Augustine held might be set down as a third position. While admitting that faith and reason are mutually related and that both have value for reaching the truth, yet faith always precedes reason. We shall have more to say on this point later on.

The complementary stand, that reason always precedes faith, may very well be true in the natural order since there is no belief where there is no knowledge and rudimentary reasoning. The danger here is that we may fail to distinguish between the priority of reason as a state of mind (rationalism) and the reason that is joined with and leads to the act of faith.

Again, in the fifth place, there are certain instances where faith is first, and others where reason takes precedence.

Finally, faith and reason may be thought of as working concomitantly as do grace and nature. The latter seems to express St. Augustine's mind best of all, although we do find elements of the third, fourth and fifth positions throughout his writings.

II.

CONVERSION: THE PROCESS

In the *De Utilitate Credendi*,⁵ St. Augustine outlines for his friend

⁵ In the *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, ed. J. P. Migne, (Paris: Petit-Montrouge, 1845), Vol. III, part 1. The English quotations where they appear are taken from "On the Profit of Believing," *The Nicene and Post-nicene Fathers*, ed. P. Schaff, (New York: Scribners, 1915), Vol. III. Translation by C. L. Cornish.

Honoratus, the Manichean, the manner of discovering religious truth, and at the same time sketches for us the process of conversion by showing the proper relation between faith and reason. It will repay us to set in order the ideas scattered throughout this treatise.

The burden of the argument can be summarized as follows: Rationalism in religious matters is not only absurd, but there is no such thing as a religion which demands no faith. The Manicheans themselves require faith in the most absurd myths, though they promise to demonstrate everything. Not only is faith needed in religion, but even in everyday life.⁶ And if such be the case in matters merely human, which after all are perhaps not so lofty, how much more should it be true in divine things?

Granted that some kind of faith is necessary merely to live as a human being, but especially if one is to follow a particular religion, how is one to find the true religion? St. Augustine does not order his matter in a very tidy fashion, but a certain sequence suggests itself from the very nature of the subject. In the treatment that follows, I have grouped pertinent ideas together and have scaled the evolution of a mind seeking truth by choosing five stages: (1) The seeker must be sincere; neither hypocritical nor merely curious. (2) He must have some belief in God. (3) He must give the truth a fair hearing and not listen merely to its enemies. (4) He should be willing to examine the various creeds and give the most likely one a trial. (5) He should also examine the character of those who propose a doctrine and hear only such a one as gives ample proof of his divine authority.

DISPOSITION OF THE SEEKER

St. Augustine sets great store by sincerity. This is what Honoratus, the prospective convert, must strive for. Since the discussion is between friends, it is to be supposed that Honoratus is sincere, that he does not come with feigned intention (*ficto pectore*) and that he is not one of those who are unworthy to receive the sacred truths of religion.⁷ It is the same disposition that is called for in the *De Vera Religione*: "Give ear then to what follows attentively and with reverence, as best you can. For this is the disposition which draws down upon use the grace of God."⁸

⁶ "Multa possunt adferri, quibus ostenditur nihil omnino humanae societatis incolumne remanere, si nihil credere statuerimus, quod non possumus tenere perceptum." *De Util. Cred.*, xxvi. See also xxx.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xxiii.

⁸ "De Vera Religione," *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, ed. Jos. Zycha, (Vienna and Prague: F. Tempsky, 1891), Vol. XXV, sect. vi, part I, c. x.

E. Portalié, commenting on the importance of moral rectitude in Augustine's outlook, writes: "Sans les qualités morales du coeur, l'esprit n'atteindra pas la

If you are determined to believe nothing, at least give me credit for not wishing to deceive you. When you go to teachers who forbid belief you certainly must believe that the teachers themselves believe in something.⁹ Were it necessary to wait until a thing is grasped with full apprehension in all its details, human society would be chaos. How do you know for example that your parents are really yours?¹⁰ Yet it would be most base to refuse to believe they are yours just because you have no experimental evidence of it. Finally, what would become of friendship if each of us was determined to believe nothing that was told us?¹¹

Which then is more noble on the part of a teacher: to demand faith before complete understanding, as the Church does, or to promise rashly like the Manicheans to confer all knowledge and the secrets thereof, and then to require belief in the most monstrous absurdities?¹² It was his disgust with this method that made Augustine ultimately abandon the Manicheans. Thus he writes in the *Confessions*:

From this, however, being led to prefer the Catholic doctrine, I felt it was with more moderation and honesty that it commanded things to be believed that were not demonstrated . . . than was the method of the Manicheans, where our credulity was mocked by audacious promises of knowledge, and then so many fabulous and absurd things were forced upon belief because they were not capable of demonstration.¹³

After all belief is the the same thing as credulity. But to demand that others believe our opinions or mere persuasions is rash and unscrupulous. Consequently

In retaining faith even of those things which as yet we comprehend not, we are set free from the rashness of such as have an opinion.¹⁴

Rightly therefore has it been ordained by the majesty of the Catholic system of teaching that they who approach religion be before all things persuaded to have faith.¹⁵

Finally, since God resists the proud, humility must always be present in some measure if truth is to be discovered. "Fides humilitatem habet."¹⁶

BELIEF IN GOD

If a man is to find the truth, he must have some belief in the existence of God. For God is Truth, and by Him only do we know the truth. "For unless we believe both that He is and that He helps men's minds, we ought not even to inquire after the true religion

vérité." "S. Augustin," *Dict. de Théologie Catholique*, (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1913), Vol. I, A, p. 2332.

⁹ *De Ut. Cred.*, ch. xxx.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, xxvi.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, xxxiii.

¹² *Ibid.*, ii; xxi.

¹³ *Confessions*, VI, 5.

¹⁴ *De Ut. Cred.*, xxv.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, xxix.

¹⁶ Tract., xxxvii, *In Joan. Evang.* See also *Epist.*, xviii.

itself."¹⁷

St. Augustine is not here speaking of the case of a man who, having no previous religious belief or interest, is suddenly illumined so as to believe. He is referring to a systematic search. If a person be searching for something, he must at least believe that it exists, that there is an object of his search. Otherwise he would be looking, quite literally, for nothing. Honoratus, since he is a religious man and a philosopher, must believe that truth in religious matters is possible, else he should long ago have abandoned his search. That anyone but a fool could say in his heart there is no God Augustine would not allow. Like St. Thomas after him and St. Paul before him, he was fond of affirming that the existence of God is knowable through the symbolism of the world's visible things.¹⁸ For most men this proof is inescapable. The simple view of the order in the world, writes M. Gilson, seemed to him to be the equivalent of an immediate proof for God's existence.¹⁹

GIVE THE TRUTH A HEARING

Since we do not go to the enemies of "dark Aristotle" to learn about Aristotle, why go to the enemies of the Church to learn about her teaching and the meaning of Holy Scripture? If to interpret literature you need a good teacher, and if you are willing to pay great sums and make long journeys to hear a master, what should not your willingness be to sacrifice all things in order to gain an exact interpretation of so important a matter as religious truth?²⁰

Briefly then, the approach to divine truth must be sincere and humble. The seeker must not rule out beforehand the possibility of belief. He must realize that faith is not credulity, neither is it a mere persuasion. If these conditions are fulfilled, then one must give the truth a hearing and not listen only to its enemies. There must be a willingness to sacrifice all for it. And finally, Augustine supposes that the man who sincerely seeks the truth believes in God. It should be noted that these preambles are nearly all moral qualities and not intellectual ones.

From the *De Vera Religione* we learn two other preludes to belief. The first is again a moral quality: Let the seeker free himself as far as possible from the three concupiscences.²¹ The Manicheans thought that the mere knowledge of the truth purified the soul; so did the Neo-Platonists. Augustine on the contrary holds that the reverse is

¹⁷ *De Ut. Cred.*, xxix; xiv.

¹⁸ *De Genesi ad Litteram*, IV, xxxiii, 49. The idea is of course scriptural in origin: "Invisibilia enim ipsius a creatura mundi, per ea quae facta sunt, intellecta, conspiciuntur." *Rom.*, I, 20. See also *Contra Gent.*, I, 12.

¹⁹ Gilson, *Introduction à l'Etude de Saint Augustin*, p. 25.

²⁰ *De Ut. Cred.*, xvii.

²¹ *De Vera Rel.*, cc. xviii, xl-xlix.

more generally true. Vision comes when the soul has turned away from creature-love and sensuality. The other prerequisite, though not necessarily a moral quality, is closely connected with the first one mentioned. It is the doing away with materialistic and imaginative concepts of God. Augustine knew well how the necessity, as he once thought, of obtaining a "phantasm of the divine Essence" had held up his conversion. He speaks of it in the *Confessions*.²²

THE SEARCH FOR THE TRUE FAITH

Having equipped himself with the proper dispositions, the sincere inquirer will now make diligent search and examine the claims of the various groups soliciting approval. "It is our business to consider what books and what men must be believed for properly worshipping God."²³

When the most likely doctrine had been sorted out it must be given a fair trial.²⁴ Such a search will inevitably lead to the Catholic religion, for it appears to be the most probable, not only because of its great influence and numbers,²⁵ but by reason of the very name "Catholic" which all heretics covet and would like to have themselves.²⁶ Add to these credentials the nobility of its doctrine,²⁷ its miracles and those of its Founder,²⁸ its glorious martyrs,²⁹ and finally the inheritance of the Apostolic See of St. Peter in Rome.³⁰ If after trial the Church is found wanting then "at length, at whatever risk, we must go and search elsewhere."³¹ Was there ever a more reasonable plea?

THE SEARCH FOR A LEADER WITH AUTHORITY

Whom shall we believe? It is best that the ignorant ("*stulti*") believe the wise.³² This is especially true in grave matters such as is the case in a search for truth and for God. But who is the wise man? And above all, how is the fool and the ignorant man to know who is wise and who not? The fact is that God Himself comes to our rescue, for otherwise our condition would be hopeless. He interposes between the fool and Himself a wise man, His wise man, and such a wise man that even the most ignorant can recognize the validity of his claims and can imitate him. And yet, how dare we set our trust in any mere man? Here is St. Augustine's beautiful reply:

Whereas therefore it needed both that a man be imitated and that our hope be not set in man, what could be done on the part of God more full of kindness and grace than that the very pure, eternal and unchangeable

²² *Conf.*, V, 10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, xvi, xix.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, xxxiv.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, xxv.

³⁰ *Ad Bonifacium, Contra Epistolas Pelagianorum*, I, 1.

³¹ *De Ut. Cred.*, xix.

³² *Ibid.*, xxvii.

²³ *De Vera Rel.*, xxv.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, xix.

²⁴ *De Ut. Cred.*, xv.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, xxvi.

Wisdom of God, unto Whom it behooves us to cleave, should deign to take upon Him the nature of Man?³³

Christ came therefore confirmed in the authority of God. This He showed by His miracles and the history of His Church. Thus not only is the Church the city on the mountain, visible to all, but the closer we examine it (by reason), the more we are impressed with the weight of its authority so as to submit to it (by faith).

III.

THE PLACE OF REASON

Throughout the *De Utilitate Credendi* St. Augustine is thinking of the transition from the method of seeking truth by reason to the method of faith. He supposes the case to be that of the "sick soul" that is looking for the truth and feels the need of conversion. Reason plays an important role in leading the soul to the threshold of truth. A man must reason to the reasonableness of faith; he must hear all the arguments in favor of this doctrine over that one, and judge which should be given the trial; he must believe in God. So far there is no question of any act of pure faith, nothing that reason plus good will cannot arrive at. But now the soul is on the doorstep of the act of faith. It can go on seeking reasons, refusing to make the act, or it can bow submission to authority and accept the doctrine of the Church by which it will arrive at the goal of truth. Unless a man believe, he will never gain true understanding, but will go on reasoning like Durtal, the future convert in Huysman's *En Route*, never arriving at conviction.³⁴ Such was Augustine's own experience. "In the order of the intellect, Augustine at first strives to seize upon and to possess the truth by his own power alone. . . . He knows (after his conversion) that truth is not conquered by force, but is received."³⁵

This is the upper side of the shield of faith; but there is also a lower side, and even in the mind of St. Augustine it might be stated in a reversal of the more familiar phrase, so that it becomes: "Nisi intellexeritis, non credetis."

Before the coming of faith, knowledge is not of the contents of faith but of the reasons we have for adhering to it.³⁶ So certain is Augustine of the necessity of a reasoning process before the advent of faith that Portalié maintains that no one has marked off with

³³ *Ibid.*, xxxiii.

³⁴ "My mistake is that I keep on arguing." P. 313.

³⁵ Gilson, "L'Idée de la Philosophie chez SS. Augustin et Thomas d'Aquin," *Acta Hebdomadae Augustinianae Thomisticae*, p. 76.

³⁶ Gilson, *Introd. à l'Etude de S. Aug.*, p. 34.

greater precision the place of reason preparatory to faith.³⁷ The words of Augustine himself will bear even more weight than those of his commentators. "If then it is reasonable that in weighty matters, such as are not to be gotten by reason, faith should precede reason, doubtless the modicum of reason [*quantulacumque*] that urges this belief is itself prior to faith."³⁸ The same idea is stated even more emphatically in the *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*: "Who does not see that thought is prior to belief? No one ever believed anything unless he first thought it should be believed."³⁹

It is not blind faith that St. Augustine wants, but an understanding-faith that does not rest supinely in what is given on authority but seeks to understand what it already believes. "Far from us the thought that God detests that whereby he made us superior to other animals; far from us an assent of pure faith which should dispense us from accepting or demanding reason."⁴⁰ "Intellectum vero valde ama."⁴¹

However, it would be a mistake to exaggerate the work of reason antecedent to faith. It is not an elaborate process. Indeed, if it were, the gift of faith would only be open to philosophers and scientists, which is manifestly not the case. Hence the word "*quantulacumque*" is important in the passage cited above. A certain minimum of reason is required; but since the content of religious truth is so far above every man, whether peasant, poet, or professor, faith through the acceptance of authority becomes the universal short cut for all.

IV.

INTELLIGENT FAITH

Great as is the work of the intellect, yet without authority we are helpless. Augustine readily admits that authority in itself is inferior to reason in the order of excellence,⁴² and that it is better suited to the ignorant than to the wise; but ultimately, when there is question of grave and lofty matters, every man must accept the authority of

³⁷ "Quant à la préparation de la foi, nul n'a marqué avec plus de netteté et de mesure qu' Augustin, le rôle de la raison qui précède et accompagne l'adhésion de l'esprit." Portalié, *Op. Cit.*, p. 2338. Elsewhere in the same article Portalié says of St. Augustine's appreciation of the role of reason: "Il est égale distance de l'intellectualisme exagéré de ceux qui ne veulent reconnaître d'autre certitude que celle qui s'impose nécessairement à l'esprit par la force d'une évidence logique absolument irrésistible, et du mysticisme sentimental qui voudrait sans preuves certaines et sûres de simples probabilités imposer une adhésion complète et irrévocable." P. 2332.

³⁸ "Si igitur rationabile est ut ad quaedam magna quae capi non possunt, fides praecedat rationem, procul dubio quantulacumque ratio quae hoc persuadet, etiam ipsa antecedit fidem." *Epist.*, CXX, i, 3.

³⁹ *De Praed. Sanctorum*, ii.

⁴⁰ *Epist.*, CXX.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² "Non naturae et excellentiae sed ipsius temporis ordine prior est." *De Vera Rel.*, xxiv.

religion.⁴³ For by reason we can learn only so much as not to make men most blessed.⁴⁴

Swinging between these two notions of "faith-through-reason" and "understanding-through-faith," St. Augustine sets forth his concept of the relation between faith and reason. Harnack wrote that Augustine was "the first of the Fathers who felt the need of rationalizing his faith."⁴⁵ But actually Augustine wanted not rationalism but reason, not credulity but "intelligent-faith."⁴⁶ Understanding comes as the reward of faith. "Do you want to understand? Then believe. If you do not understand, I say believe. Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore do not seek to understand that you may believe, but believe to understand."⁴⁷

Scores of instances could be adduced to show how faith brings understanding. From the many possible cases in modern times I select the example in the autobiography of Johannes Jørgensen. While in Italy, a little over a year before his conversion, the Danish author wrote in his diary: "Surrender yourself to the Church . . . and you will *understand* the Scriptures. The clearest revelation of the Word of God is Christ. If you are in communion with Him everything else will become *clear* to you."⁴⁸

Later on his friend Verkade wrote to him in the same strain: "For every difficulty that is solved for you, ten new ones will spring up, of which you will insist on having a solution. Make a generous sacrifice! Say: My God, I believe in Thee."⁴⁹

Jørgensen was slow to surrender his rationalism, unwilling to accept a faith he could not understand beforehand. It is just such an attitude that really makes understanding impossible, says Augustine. You must be humble. "Fides humilitatem habet." One does not enter the sheepfold by any door but by the way Christ has pointed out, which is the way of faith. No one has ever regretted believing the doctrine of the Church before he understood it.⁵⁰ The "generous sacrifice" is magnificently rewarded. "Intellectus enim est merces fidei." Truly a

⁴³ "Bonorum auctoritas imperitae multitudinis videatur esse salubrior, ratio vero aptior eruditis: Tamen, quia nullus hominum nisi ex imperito peritus fit . . . evenit ut omnibus bona magna et occulta discere cupientibus, non aperiatur nisi auctoritas januam." *De Ord.*, II, ix, 26.

⁴⁴ *Retract.*, I, xiv, 2.

⁴⁵ *Lehrb. der Dogmengesch.*, III, 97. Portalié, 2337.

⁴⁶ Blondel, M., "The Latent Resources in St. Augustine's Thought," *A Monument to St. Augustine*. (London: Sheed & Ward, 1934), p. 334.

⁴⁷ "Intelligere vis? Crede. . . . Si non intellexisti, inquam, crede. Intellectus enim merces est fidei. Ergo noli quaerere intelligere ut credas, sed crede ut intelligas." *Tract. XXIX in Joan. Evang.*, 6.

⁴⁸ Jørgensen, J., *An Autobiography*, (New York, London and Chicago: Longmans, Green & Co., 1928), Vol. I, p. 223.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 290.

⁵⁰ "Nullum existimo esse mortaliū, qui cum ea quae fides tenet, intellexerit, et a summo ac vero Deo per animas sanctas dicta esse crediderit, non eis cedat atque consentiat." *De Civ. Dei*, XX,i,1.

case of seeking first the Kingdom of Heaven by faith and having understanding added.

V.

GRACE

When once a man has, in the Augustinian way, accepted the Faith, reason, as we have indicated, is not abandoned. Rather does it become more broad in its operation, for it is no longer limited to the experimental fact. The believer constantly reasons; his mind is ever at work exploiting the contents of faith.⁵¹ "Everyone thinks who believes; by believing he thinks, and thinking he believes."⁵² Thus, with the believer, there is a certain concomitance of reason and faith. Just as God, the primary Cause, moves the secondary causes as secondary causes, so too does faith respect the autonomy of reason and move it as reason. At this point one is brought face to face with the mystery of faith, which is seen for the first time as naught else but the mystery of grace. Having examined the problem of faith and reason from the human side, it is now seen from the divine as "a particular case of the problem of nature and grace."⁵³

What Boyer writes may not clear up the mystery of grace, but at least it will convince us that there is a mystery.

To contemplate, one's vision must be purified. And purification comes only through rectitude of will in leading a good life. But to live well it is necessary to love what ought to be loved; and how love it if you are not in a position to know it? If intellectual knowledge is the only sort possible the problem, in our present state, is insoluble. But there is the knowledge which comes through faith. An authority is made manifest, giving its credentials and indicating the way to be followed for a reform of morals.⁵⁴

Vision through purity, purity through good will, good will through good living, through love, through knowledge. But how are we to know what we should know and, most important of all, how bring ourselves to act according to our knowledge? It is true that authority intervenes, showing us the way, but what is effectively to bring the will to adhere to it? Boyer continues: "To make salvation possible, we must have charity infused. This is grace."

In other words, a man might go on reasoning until doomsday, but without the hidden work of grace he would never be brought to the act of faith. Besides, faith is not inevitably produced by the arguments of reason, but is a free act of the will.⁵⁵ Reason plays its part,

⁵¹ "Ainsi la philosophie augustinienne n'a voulu être et ne peut être qu' une exploration rationnelle du contenu de la foi." Gilson, *Introd.*, p. 39.

⁵² *De Praed. Sanctorum*, ii.

⁵³ Gilson, *Acta*, p. 84.

⁵⁴ Boyer, C., *L'Idée de la Vérité dans la Philosophie de S. Augustin*, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1920), p. 251.

⁵⁵ "Si quis dixerit, assensum fidei Christianae non esse liberum, sed argumentis humanae rationis necessario produci . . . anathema sit." Denziger, Bannwart & Umberg, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, Canon 1814.

but it is not the determining factor. On the other hand, neither grace nor reason coupled with grace force the will. "All rational life, if it is perfect, obeys the unchanging truth deep within which speaks without sound of words. And if it obeys not it is vitiated."⁵⁶

The soul is now living in a moral world. Its ontological perfection consists in an adherence to the light of divine grace. This interior knowledge which is the basis for an earnest inward acceptance and performance of God's Will is the summit of earthly attainment. "Deum et animam cupio scire." It is the wisdom of the saints and the highest rung in Augustine's ladder of the spiritual life on earth. Faith has done its work. Belief is no longer difficult because it has grown into understanding. We have passed a long way beyond the future convert's first faint curiosity regarding the possibility of finding truth in the Church. It is midday to the original twilight. None the less, both extremes have a common element, and that element is grace. Repeatedly Augustine returns to his insistence on the necessity of grace. "Without Me you can do nothing," is as true regarding the first salutary thought as it is in the full maturity of mystical love. "Man does not begin to turn his mind towards God and away from evil except by the unmerited and gratuitous gift of God."⁵⁷

Augustine admits the place of reason before faith, but the very act of reasoning to discover the truth is by the impulse of grace.⁵⁸

VI.

CONCLUSION

Since his philosophy is one of experience, St. Augustine would never consent to a separation of the speculative from real life, not even for the sake of argument. Failure to recognize this fact explains why those who tend towards analysis have succeeded in misunderstanding the basic integralism of Augustine. Too frequently is the body of his doctrine separated from its soul. There is no Augustinian philosophy independent of his theology, nor a theology that does not depend on the philosophical principles he borrowed from the Neo-Platonists. It is true that in a certain sense all Catholic philosophy looks to Theology. But there is a great difference in the approach of an Augustine and in that of a Thomas of Aquin. Gilson writes: "There exists a Thomistic Philosophy which is naught but philosophy, in that the principles upon which it rests and the conclusions it draws are taken from the order of reason alone, independent

⁵⁶ *De Vera Rel.*, lv.

⁵⁷ *Lib. ad Bonif.*, ii, 10.

⁵⁸ "Nemo sibi sufficit vel ad incipiendam vel ad perficiendam fidem, sed sufficientia nostra est ex Deo: quoniam fides, si non cogitur nulla est; et non sumus idonei cogitare aliquid quasi ex nobismetipsis, sed sufficientia nostra ex Deo est." *De Praedest. Sanctorum*, ii.

of revelation."⁵⁹

But in Augustine we do not find any such clear line of demarcation. I have sketched a process beginning at the twilight of reason-working-towards-faith, and ending in the sheer brilliance of faith-that-understands. But the two, faith and reason, represent only a particular aspect of the more radical problem of nature and grace. And where nature leaves off and grace begins, where philosophy yields to theology in Augustine's mind no one can rightly say. It is the same with faith and reason. It would appear that at one period in the soul's odyssey towards truth reason is more evident than faith; at other times faith is more prominent than reason. But faith is always there and reason is always there if real progress is being made. As M. Gilson observes, even before the coming of faith, natural reason is already activated by the grace of God ("déjà travaillée par la grâce de Dieu").⁶⁰ And the specific way in which this grace begins to work is by inducing belief in the possibility of belief.

At the other end of the process reason is not dormant. The propositions of faith become the implied antecedents of every reasoning process. "Cogitat omnis qui credit, credendo cogitat et cogitando credit."⁶¹

Conversion is generally not so spectacular as St. Augustine implies, nor so dramatic as was his own. But definite advantages are derived from treating an ideal case. Actually grace works like dew distilled on flowers in the silence of the night. Only with the coming of the morning sun is the treasure perceived. Yet it was always there. Grace too is such a distillation or leaven, to use the Gospel figure, which works until the day it is discovered. But no matter how far back we drive the process of reason-leading-to-faith, grace seems to have been at work. As St. Augustine himself explains it: To find the truth you must have examined it; to examine it you must look for it; and to look for it you must want to find it. But you would not want to find it unless you believed it could be found. And you would not believe it could be found unless you already believe that truth exists, that God exists. And how believe that God exists unless you are sufficiently free from sensuality to recognize vestiges of the divine Presence in the world?⁶² And finally, no man frees himself from sensuality unless God work withal.⁶³ Unless the help of God through His grace is allowed at the very beginning, the mind can make but

⁵⁹ Gilson, *Acta*, p. 83.

⁶⁰ Gilson, *Introd.*, p. 34.

⁶¹ *De Praedest. Sanctorum*, ii.

⁶² "Quanto quisque est purgator, tanto verum facilius intuetur. Verum igitur videre velle, ut animam purgas cum ideo purgetur, ut videas, perversum certe atque praeposterum est." *De Ut. Cred.*, xxxiv.

⁶³ "Sine gratia fidei quae a Deo est, nemo potest vincere concupiscentias vitiosas." *Epist.*, iii.

insignificant progress towards truth. Not that grace and faith are the same, but faith, the first of the theological virtues, is the primary manifestation of grace.

Faith then for St. Augustine becomes such a radical thing in our relationship with God that its roots strike down to the very core of our being. "Have faith. But to have faith pray with faith. Yet it is impossible to pray with faith unless you have faith, for it is faith alone that prays."⁶⁴

If such a passage means anything, it would seem to indicate that the influence of faith is so all-pervading that nothing can lead us to faith but faith. Yet it has been shown elsewhere that St. Augustine makes provision for reason. In fine, one has the suspicion that he was himself rather confused, and that he alternately referred to faith and reason in two different senses.

It is possible that he sometimes means by faith the formal act of faith, or conversion; and reason would be prior to this. While at other times he appears to be speaking of a vague and general kind of faith in the possibility of faith. Augustine himself points out that he who seeks religious truth either believes that it exists or that it is possible. This belief is prior to or concomitant with the reasoning process by which the sincere man examines the various creeds in order to determine which one is to be believed and who is to be believed. This vague, half-conscious, conative faith is a hidden manna which only makes its presence known in the fullness of God's appointed time.⁶⁵

Thus in the early reasoning of the potential convert there is a very broad kind of faith. But it reveals itself only on careful introspection. "Before faith, the intelligence which Augustine here speaks of is naught else but natural reason already activated by God's grace. It is God Who puts it in motion and calls it to Himself."⁶⁶

After the formal act of faith, the goal is already substantially possessed. "Faith," writes St. Paul, "is the substance of things to be hoped for."⁶⁷ And once faith has been consciously received and accepted, reason digs deeper into the "substance," "*in arcana Veritatis*," exploiting the hidden treasure of wisdom and knowledge.⁶⁸

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⁶⁴ "Habete fidem. Sed ut habeatis fidem, orate fide. Sed orare fide non potest nisi fidem habeatis; non enim orat nisi fides." *Lib. Homil.*, xvii, # 5.

⁶⁵ Poulain applies this same principle on a much higher level to emergent stages of the mystical life. He makes much of the "hidden element". Poulain, A., *The Graces of Interior Prayer*, Tr. Lenora L. Yorke Smith, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner; St. Louis: Herder, 1910 Imprimatur), p. 207, # 19.

⁶⁶ Gilson, *Introd.*, p. 34.

⁶⁷ *Hebr.*, xi, I.

⁶⁸ *Contra Acad.*, III, xx.

INTENTIONALITY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF AVICENNA

THE FACT that man is a composite nature, spiritual and material, gives rise to many problems for the philosopher. Perhaps the most vexing of all is that which concerns the peculiar nature of man's knowledge, tied down to material things for its origin, yet ever trying to escape from the initial impediments of matter by progressive refinements of abstraction and reasoning. Knowledge consists precisely in the assimilation of mind and object known; its mystery lies in the fact that the knowing subject becomes the object as object, remaining all the while in its own right as subject and in no wise affecting the ontological constitution of the object.¹ To this union by which the self becomes aware of the non-self is given the name intentionality.² This union is nothing else than that vital act by which the intellect enriches itself with the perfections, the being, of external things, thus compensating its own ontological limitation by an unlimited capacity for acquiring other beings intentionally.³ This mode of being set up by intellection presents one phase of the problem of the One and Many, because by it one thing becomes many things as known.

THE DILEMMA OF KNOWLEDGE OF BODIES

For man the question of intentionality resolves itself into a consideration of causality. Since the knowing subject acquires its proper perfection by the operation of knowing, it must be in some way determined to this perfection; and since one does not just *know* in general but rather *knows a given object*, the determination must be with respect to one particular thing. Hence to ask what determines knowledge, is merely to ask what is the adequate cause of the intentional union.⁴

Let us determine more precisely the scope within which we are to consider intentionality. Our question is: How can man know the external world, the world of bodies, by his intellect? If we say he knows it directly, our answer will be either more or less Aristotelian,

¹ For an explanation of this point cf. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus*, Phil. Nat. IV. Q. VI. Art. II. (Vives ed.), p. 182. Also Cf. Cajetan *In Summam Theologicam* I. 50. 2c.

² This aspect of intellection is treated by Rousselot, *The Intellectualism of St. Thomas*, trans. James E. O'Mahony (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935), pp. 17 ff.

³ Cf. S. T., I. 14. 1c.

⁴ This means that there must be a determination with respect to the thing known and also a determination with respect to immateriality and necessity, since knowledge is produced, albeit differently, by both subject and object.

or it will fall into the extreme materialism of Democritus. If we say he knows it indirectly, through the knowledge of some object which bears resemblance by participation to the external world, we shall cast our lot with Plato or with some substitute theory for his intuition of the Ideas. The dilemma is penetrating: If man's intellectual knowledge is directly determined by the object, which is in constant flux, how are we going to satisfy Parmenides' demands for the unchangeableness of true knowledge, how will we be able to say that matter can act on spirit? But if the intellect is not directly determined by the thing known, how is the fact to be explained that man actually knows bodies of a material world?

AVICENNA AND THE ARISTOTELIAN NEOPLATONIC TRADITION

The purpose of this treatment is to examine Avicenna's theory of cognition and his solution of the metaphysical nature of intentionality, to see if it offers a mean between the two extremes of this dilemma. In particular three passages will be studied to determine what notion of intentionality can be derived from them. The aim is not to solve all the problems that are bound up in the various metaphysical implications of knowledge, but to outline the salient points and see to what extent the solution of Avicenna satisfies the demands of experiential fact and metaphysical principle.⁵

With Avicenna we are well within the Aristotelian-Neoplatonic tradition, with the latter element largely predominant. We find ourselves involved immediately in the fundamental principles which underlie the metaphysics of both schools. Let us put these principles as briefly as possible. On the Aristotelian side we find: the essential dualism of matter and form; quantified matter is the principle of individuation and of multiplication within the species, purely passive and consequently repugnant to intellection, both on the part of the subject and the object; form is necessarily the active principle, specifying and determining its subject both physically and intellectually, and thus essentially ordained to reproduce itself as much as possible. These two principles of matter and form (for they are not individually complete existent beings) are transcendently related as elements in composite essences of the material world, but yet are in some way separable in the abstractive process of human intellection. With Aristotle the four kinds of causes are clearly distinguished (although the exemplary cause is rejected⁶) and the ultimate foundation for the neces-

⁵ The ultimate test of any metaphysical explanation of reality is to see whether the judgments of its principles can be resolved in the light of first principles and whether its judgments of fact can be resolved on the plane of sense experience. Cf. J. Maritain, *Les Degrés du Savoir* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1932), pp. 253 ff.

⁶ Aristotle admits an exemplary cause only in the case of artifacts. Cf. *Metaphysica*, xiii. 5. 1079 b 23.

sity and universality of our cognition is placed in the eternal, immutable existence of the physical species itself.⁷ Thus matter, form, causality, and intellection itself are subordinate to and, in a sense, functions of a world of natures—of necessarily existing essences. Aristotle gives us a philosophy of natures and a metaphysic encompassing only essences.

In the Neoplatonic milieu the picture is quite different; because of the Dionysian principle that good is diffusive of itself, and the attempt of Plato to integrate all the Platonic Ideas under the Idea of the good, and because of the supra-existential one of Plotinus, there is a persistent tendency to confuse formal and efficient causality. Instead of a strict generation and corruption of bodies caused by the efficient action of the bodies themselves, there is a hierarchic emanation of forms, both intelligible and physical. So well confused into one are the logical and ontological orders that the very possibility of beings existing in their own right seems destroyed. We can mention also the lack of an adequate understanding of the principle of universal secondary causality which was one of the chief philosophical deficiencies among the predecessors of St. Thomas.⁸

From the Aristotelian principles given above, it is clear that some causality higher than sense must be invoked to enable the intellect to get at the intelligible quiddity embedded in the concretized world of natures, which is the world of sense; otherwise we are left with mere sensism. This Aristotle did by postulating the agent intellect—a purely active and immaterial power of a soul which is the form of a body. It is also equally clear that in the Neoplatonic system the immateriality of human cognition must be explained by a direct intuition of forms by the intellect. This system cannot get the intellect “down to earth” except vicariously. Aristotle had quite a time getting the soul out of the body; the Neoplatonist had a worse time getting it in.

In order the better to understand our problem, it will be apropos here to add to these Aristotelian and Neoplatonic principles a word concerning Avicenna's own metaphysic of forms. It is a system that developed out of the Plotinian concept of the structure of the universe. The metaphysics of any Neoplatonic system is one whose primary note is *necessity*, and with Avicenna this becomes a system of

⁷ This would seem logically to reduce cognition to merely transient action for if the physical universe itself is not intelligible in virtue of a higher exemplar intelligibility which it participates how can it produce cognition in the human intellect?

⁸ Avicenna himself was not so far removed from the Thomistic doctrine on this point as the school of Motecallemin. Cf. Gilson's excellent treatment of the Avicennan influence on later Augustinianism, “Pourquoi Saint Thomas a critiqué Saint Augustin,” *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, (1926-27), pp. 8-25.

necessary essences and of necessary emanation of forms. Because of this note of necessity we find it set down as a fundamental principle in all Neoplatonic thought that the *one* can produce only *one* in any order. Hence multiplicity must come by some sort of "interference" with the emanation from the one, which interference is occasioned by the receptive disposition of a lower order. The First Cause is absolutely and necessarily one; from it there proceeds necessarily the first intelligence, which has the note of necessity insofar as it is referred to the First Cause and the note of possibility insofar as it is taken in itself. Then from this supreme duality or contrariety⁹ proceeds necessarily the multiplicity of existing beings. This means that the existing beings are contingent in themselves, but the emanation which produces them and the fact that there are contingent beings is absolutely necessary. It is important to note that this production of inferior beings is not strictly in the line of efficient causality; more correctly it should be considered a type of "information" which gives rise to a hierarchy of being in which the note of continuity and dependence is more predominant than the note of discrete beings existing in their own right. Each lower being is directly and completely dependent on the one above it, and the superior has absolute dominion over the inferior. In such wise is constituted the necessitarian universe of Avicenna, the Arabian alternative for the freely created Christian universe. In the order of its necessity are brought about ten levels of intelligences each of which, by knowing the being above it and by knowing itself, constitutes a minor universe, a microcosm, and in this fashion the note of distinction between the various grades of intelligences is established, but always, it seems, subordinate to the note of dynamic continuity.¹⁰ The lowest of these ten intelligences inhabits the sphere of the moon and, because its efficacy is too far removed from the First Cause to be able to produce another lower intelligence, its proper role in the scheme of things is to be the *dator formarum*, the separate agent intelligence which bestows forms on the matter of our terrestrial globe and on the human intellect. This intelligence possesses all the forms in its own immateriality, but not precisely as a storehouse of many forms; rather it is a possession in the simplicity of its own form—*per modum unius*. There must be some resolution of this unity into the multiplicity which is received in the

⁹ For St. Thomas' solution of the *cause of plurality* cf. *In Boet. De Trinitate* 4. 1c.

¹⁰ With the strict followers of Plotinus this "descent" of forms would be considered only as a manner of explaining the universe as constituted *in facto esse* whereas with Avicenna, who as a Mohammedan had to hold some sort of a production of the world, it indicates the actual generation of physical reality, its ontological *feri*. For a brief description of this descent of intelligences cf. J. T. Muckle, C.S.B., *Algazel's Metaphysics*: (Toronto: St. Michael's Medieval Studies, 1933), pp. 119 ff. In general Algazel gives a rather accurate survey of Avicenna, whom he sets forth as an adversary of Mohammedan orthodoxy.

sublunary world. How Avicenna attempts to explain this will be considered later.¹¹

ABSTRACTION IN AVICENNA

With the fundamental principles of the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic traditions well in mind, and remembering the more peculiar features of Avicenna's own cosmogony, the question can now be asked: Does Avicenna's theory of intentionality resolve the "conflict" of spirit and matter? does his theory of cognition bridge the gap between sense and intellect?

First we shall take up a passage in which Avicenna has been attempting to prove the immaterial substantiality of the soul by showing that it can receive spiritual forms, entirely devoid of matter:

In addition we are able to prove this fact by another demonstration, by the affirmation that the intellective power abstracts intelligibles from designated quantity, and from "where," and from "position," and from all the other predicaments we have mentioned.¹²

This passage requires little comment except to note that it does not say precisely what the "intellective power" is. If we look on it as the intellectual faculty of the human soul, we seem to be on definitely Aristotelian ground; if it is an extrinsic agent, we are on the threshold of Avicenna's theory of intentionality.

There is at hand another passage which seems to point more strongly to the intellective operation as deriving from the human supposit:

That which is most appropriate of all the properties of man is this: the formation of universal intelligible intentions entirely abstracted from matter . . . and the ascent to the knowledge of unknown objects from the known intelligibles, through the acts of opinion and formation.¹³

The most worthy operation of man is to "form" universal intentions

¹¹ It can readily be seen that such a cosmogony of the universe makes the First Cause exceedingly remote from the affairs of men. In spite of the continuous emanation, Avicenna holds that man cannot prove the existence of the First Cause, at least not by a physical proof. Such a position would seem to destroy God's knowledge of singulars and his Providence. Yet this system represents Avicenna's attempt to reconcile Neoplatonic metaphysics with Mohammedan mysticism, a mysticism which finds its culmination in the union of the human soul with the tenth agent intelligence—the inhabitant of the moon. On this latter point it might be interesting to refer to St. Thomas' discussion of man's ultimate happiness, *Sum. c. Gent.* III. 40-45, wherein he completes his refutation of the Arabian position.

¹² "Quod possumus etiam probare alia demonstratione, dicentes quod virtus intellectiva abstrahit intelligibilia a quantitate designata et ab ubi, et a situ, et a ceteris omnibus quae praediximus." Avicenna. *Lib. VI Nat.*, P. V. *cap.* 2. f. 23b. (Venice: 1508)

¹³ "Quae autem est magis propria ex proprietatibus hominis est haec, scil., formare intentiones universales intelligibiles omnino abstractas a materia . . . et procedere ad sciendum incognita ex cognitis intelligibilibus, credendo et formando." *Op. cit.*, *cap.* I. f. 22v a.

which are entirely abstracted from matter.¹⁴ This word *formare* is of special significance in the thought of Avicenna, as we shall see; let us consider it more closely. It certainly looks, if words have any meaning, as though Avicenna were attributing the formation of universal concepts to man himself.¹⁵ What else can be the sense of the verb "to form"? It says the very opposite of "receive," and seems to indicate an active assimilation on the part of the intellect as though this were a faculty acting in its own right. And so, on the surface value of these two passages alone we might well build up a case for the Aristotelianism of Avicenna: man by his intellectual faculty abstracts intelligible forms from individuating matter and thus makes universal intentions. Upon what right, then, have we placed Avicenna's theory of intellection squarely in the Neoplatonic tradition?

MEANING OF "ABSTRACTION" IN AVICENNA

We pass now to a longer passage in which Avicenna points out what the *virtus intellectiva* indicates in his system, and the peculiar position that *abstraction* holds for him:

We shall say that the human soul first understands in potency and then in act. Every perfection, however, which goes from potency to act, does not do so except by a cause which has that perfection in act and hence can reproduce it in act. Such, therefore, is the cause by which our souls go from potency to act in respect to intelligible things. But the cause which gives the intelligible form can be only an intelligence in act, who possesses the principles of abstract intelligible forms. The comparison of this intelligence to our souls is like the comparison of the sun to our vision. Just as the sun is seen in act through itself, and through its light other things, which were not seen in act, can be seen in act, so in like manner is the disposition of this intelligence to our souls. For our rational power arranges the singulars which are in the imagination and which, upon illumination from the light of the intelligence acting on us, become free from matter and the conditions of matter and are impressed upon the rational soul; not as if these singulars go from the imagination into our intellect, nor as if some intention depending on many (since considered in itself it is "separate") produces through itself its own likeness, but rather because, from the arrangement of these singulars, the soul is rendered apt to receive an abstraction from the agent intelligence. Because considerations and arrangements are motions preparing the soul to receive the emanation, just as middle terms necessarily prepare for the reception of the conclusion, although one happens in one way and the other in another, as you shall know later.¹⁶

¹⁴ St. Thomas refers to this use of *formatio*. Cf. 3 *Sent.*, d. 23. 2. 2c.

¹⁵ It is interesting to note a parallel text in St. Thomas: "*Operatio autem propria hominis est intelligere.*" *Sum. c. Gent.* II. 76. But would not a strict Aristotelian be apt to say that the most proper operation of man is to *syllogize*? St. Albert extends the position of Avicenna: "*Homo in quantum homo solus est intellectus.*" *De Intellectu et Intelligibili*. II. c. 8. vol. 9 (Borgnet ed., Paris, 1890), p. 515b. There are significant parallels between this work of St. Albert and the *Liber VI Naturalium* of Avicenna.

¹⁶ "*Dicemus quod anima humana prius est intelligens in potentia, deinde fit intelligens in effectu. Omne autem quod exit de potentia ad effectum, non exit nisi per causam quae habet illud in effectu, et extrahit ad illum; ergo haec est*

The difficulties of this passage are many and obvious. The translator has attempted to render the original Arabic into Latin literally, a fact which makes it very hard to make sense out of the text, especially when we consider it in isolation. First of all we note that the human soul is said to be at the beginning in potency to knowledge; this sounds somewhat akin to the Aristotelian doctrine that the intellect is at first like a *tabula rasa*, upon which nothing has been written, but Avicenna says the soul and not the intellect is in potency. It is not always too clear that he holds a possible intellect as a distinct faculty of the soul;¹⁷ although frequently this would seem to be the case. He speaks of powers of the soul rather than faculties, and such a power may well be merely a function and not a distinct principle of operation. Such might be expected in a philosophy based upon formal emanation where there is not too much account taken of the real distinction between various beings. *In effectum*, is the typical translation of the Arabian term meaning "in act." Just as the sun is visible by reason of the fact that it actually emits light and as its light makes visible that which was only potentially visible before, so the separate intelligence¹⁸ is ordered to bestow upon us the intelligible form; and in one and the same act we know the form it gives and it as the giver.

causa per quam animae nostrae in rebus intelligibilibus exeunt de potentia ad effectum. Sed causa dandi formam intelligibilem non est nisi intelligentia in effectum, penes quam sunt principia formarum intelligibilium abstractarum. Cujus comparatio ad animas nostras est sicut comparatio solis ad visus nostros; quia sicut sol videtur per se in effectum, et videtur luce ipsius in effectum, quod non videbatur in effectum, sic est dispositio hujus intelligentiae quantum ad nostras animas. Virtus enim rationalis, cum considerat singula quae sunt in imaginatione, et illuminatur luce intelligentiae agentis in nos, quam prediximus, fiunt nuda a materia et ab ejus penditiis et imprimuntur in anima rationali, non quasi ipsa de imaginatione mutetur ad intellectum nostrum, neque quia intentio pendens ex multis, cum ipsa in se sit considerata nuda, per se faciat similem sibi, sed quia ex consideratione eorum aptatur anima ut emanet in eam ab intelligentia agente abstractio. Cogitationes enim et considerationes motus sunt aptantes animam ad recipiendum emanationem, sicut termini medii praeparant ad recipiendum conclusionem necessario, quamvis illud fiat uno modo, et hoc alio, sicut postea scies." *Op. cit.*, cap. 5. f. 25b.

¹⁷ We can note here one text in which Avicenna seems to adequate "virtue" with an intellective faculty. "Virtutis ergo contemplativae comparatio ad formas nudas quas praenominavimus aliquando est sicut comparatio ejus quod est in potentia absoluta, et hoc est cum haec potentia animae nondum recepit aliquid de eo quod est perfectio quantum ad eam, et tunc vocatur *intellectus materialis*, ad similitudinem aptitudinis materiae primae, quae ex se non habet aliquam formarum, sed est subjectum omnium formarum." *Op. cit.*, P. I. cap. 5. f. 5v a. (Italics ours.) In any case it is evident that there would not be much room for a distinction into clear-cut faculties in his system. But St. Thomas refutes him on the supposition that the *intellectus possibilis* is a distinct faculty. Cf. *Sum. c. Gent.* II. 74,76. Also *S. Th.* I. 84. 4c.

¹⁸ We might note another text which makes it a little clearer that the agent intelligence is separate. "Quoniam cum conjunctus fuerit intellectus qui est in potentia cum illo intellectu qui est in actu aliquo modo conjunctionis imprimetur in eo aliqua species formarum quae est acquisita *ab extrinsecus*." *Op. cit.*, cap. 5. f. 5v b. (Italics ours.)

This intelligence is the *dator formarum*, as mentioned above.¹⁹ According to Avicenna then, intellection is not the product of the human mind but is an adventitious gift.

A point can be noted here which brings us closer to the fundamental criticism of the position of Avicenna. The *dator* operates in a manner exactly parallel in giving material forms to prime matter and intelligible forms to the human soul. In the material order a thing cannot have real efficiency, for this causality is reserved to the separate intelligence alone; at best it can have merely a dispositive effect, bringing the contrary elements of a material thing into sufficient harmony so that its prime matter will be adapted to receive the new form from the intelligence. It is to be noted that this predisposition is an essential condition of the distribution of forms in both orders. The separate intelligence, containing all forms in its unity and constantly and necessarily emitting them, requires diverse dispositions which can only be brought about by conditions in the matter which is to receive a particular form. Consequently for Avicenna generation and corruption²⁰ and all accidental mutations consist in the reception of a new form. But it would not be quite proper to ask here what becomes of the old form, since we do not have a universe of entirely discrete beings. It might be more accurate not to speak of an old and a new form but merely to say that matter is attached successively to a certain formal aspect of the agent intelligence and that this gives it the appearance of possessing a form in its own right. Now a precise parallel to this continuous diffusion of forms into matter takes place in the intelligible order, so that there is an exact reproduction, as in a mirror, of the cosmological order. And it seems to make no difference on which side we put the mirror, the parallel is perfect.²¹

And so we find our text saying that all the rational powers of the human soul can do on their own behalf is to *arrange* the sensible forms of the phantasms so as to *predispose* the possible intellect (of the entire soul), making it apt for the influx from the separate intelligence.

¹⁹ For a discussion of the relation of this theory to memory and the intellectual virtues cf. the study by Vernon J. Bourke: "Intellectual Memory in the Thomistic Theory of Knowledge," *The Modern Schoolman*, XVIII (January, 1941), pp. 21-24.

²⁰ This means, of course, those phenomena that appear to the senses as generation and corruption; for where there is no real action of bodies there can be no theory of real generation and corruption.

²¹ It is to be noted that the difficulties inherent in such a position are many. Indeed, although Avicenna has told us that a form must be separated from matter and the conditions of matter in order to become known, he will yet insist that knowledge consists in the reception of the form or, if one prefer, in the union with the form—but it is a union in which the knower and the thing known yet remain *two*. Avicenna flatly denies that the subject actually becomes its object and insists that knowledge is intentional duality, not unity.

But is this really a solution of intellection, or merely a postponement of its greatest difficulty? No long study of the text is required to note the vast difference between Avicenna's concept of abstraction and the usual Aristotelian position as elaborated by St. Thomas. Abstraction is not for Avicenna a process by which the phantasm is elevated by the agent intellect, spiritualized by a *motio fluens*, so that the residual matter "falls away" and the content of the phantasm becomes intelligible in act; it is rather a presentation by an extrinsic agent of the same form as is produced by the arrangement of phantasms, but according to the "to be" of that extrinsic agent itself. We see by the words of the text that any sort of "transference" of the form itself from the phantasm to the possible intellect is out of question—and this is equally true for Thomism. Nor will Avicenna allow the possibility that the *intention*, the species preserved from several concrete instances, the Aristotelian *experimentum*,²² can act upon the intellect to generate there a spiritual form similar to itself. His fundamental position is quite clear: Intellection is from without, a gratuitous presentation, and in no way directly dependent on the form in the phantasm or upon any operation by which man can order the forms in the *phantasia*.²³ There can be no instrumental causality which will induce an intelligible species in the intellective part of the human soul. Thus he is true to the Platonic tradition in refusing to a material form any capacity to produce or effect a spiritual form, not precisely because a body cannot act at all through its form, but because spirit and matter are on entirely different levels—they are mutually irreconcilable.

Although this passage to which we have devoted some space represents the historical position of Avicenna, which was criticised by St. Thomas as being in the Platonic tradition of what Gilson has called an "integral extrinsicism,"²⁴ there still remains the difficulty of reconciling this interpretation with the two apparently Aristotelian passages cited before, especially the one which refers to the formation of intelligible intentions as the most proper action of man. *Abstraction* is a highly technical term, and to associate Avicennan cognition with the theory of Aristotle on the basis of this word would be sophistical. It seems that much the same must be said for the word "formation." *Formare*, with Avicenna, has a definite and specialized signification bearing very little resemblance to the meaning found in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. It refers to the special type of union which Avicenna invokes in his attempt to explain knowledge; it is called formation merely because it means a union with the form which is "borrowed" from the separate intelligence. We might say that this

²² Cf. *Post. Anal.* II. 15 99B-100A.

²³ Avicenna has five internal senses. Cf. *S. Th.*, I. 78. 4c.

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

union signifies a sort of participation, but a participation which is physical not intentional, and which in the ultimate analysis is almost grossly material, though described in terms which seem to demand a high degree of immateriality.²⁵

The explanation of Avicenna is inadequate, and we say this without hesitation even though we cannot, through Latin translations, plumb the depths of his thought. To determine why he should have evolved such a doctrine goes beyond the scope of this discussion, but a solution might well be found in his attempt to conciliate Neoplatonic metaphysics with Mohammedan eschatology. Avicenna had attempted to safeguard human knowledge in order to demonstrate the immortality of the soul, but he has severely compromised the first, since it is not man himself who performs the act of knowing but rather the separate intelligence who knows for him. And it is to be feared that man's immortality, like his knowledge, will be largely vicarious; it will be due to the conjunction of the soul with the lunar intelligence so that man in some wise assumes the latter's immortality for his own. This union constituted the Mohammedan mysticism and is the goal of the gradual elevation of the human soul above things of sense until it acquires complete independence of the material world, and its intellection as well as its happiness comes about by direct contact with the *dator formarum*. Thus the ultimate difference between Avicennan and Aristotelian-Thomistic cognition is that the former consists in the apprehension of forms coming from above and the latter in the abstraction of forms coming from below.

THE LACUNA OF KNOWLEDGE

In the light of our criticism Avicenna is shown to have failed to bridge the gap between sense and intellect. If there is no causal nexus (and there cannot be in his system) between the sensible form which represents the external world and the intelligible form which is the basis of our predication about reality, how are we to be certain that the form bestowed upon our intellect gives us the definition, the essence, of the thing outside? In other words we are asking if Avicenna does not furnish us with a strong indication of the so-called "critical problem." Such a notion must have been very far from his mind. It is a matter of history that the critical spirit did not arise until excessive voluntarism had dissipated the recognition of first principles and a reliance upon them, and men wanted to prove the possibility of everything—even the possibility of proof. Avicenna was not the man to despise first principles. But there is a strong metaphysical reason why Arabian philosophy would never encounter such a diffi-

²⁵ This inability to transcend material notions is common to many Mohammedan philosophers.

culty. With it, where everything was viewed as the manifestation of necessity, and even God was free only to acquiesce in things as they must be, knowledge was necessarily knowledge, and that was all there was to it. Avicenna was at least correct in placing the problem of knowledge where it should be placed: he did not intrude an artificial barrier between mind and knowledge, but he faced the very real difficulty of a gap between two types of knowledge, sense and intellectual—the problem first outlined by the extremes of Parmenides and Heraclitus and restated for the modern world (albeit on an impossible basis) by Emmanuel Kant.

REASONS FOR AVICENNA'S FAILURE

Avicenna's real difficulty, like Kant's, is that his problem cannot be solved on the premises in which he has stated it, for it involves a fundamental error in regard to the nature of being itself.²⁶ He has misconceived the constitution of the intentional union, thinking it to be merely the reception of a form, or, more rigorously, a mere sharing of a form, through which man and the separate intelligence make contact for a moment. But such a concept is foreign to the nature of knowledge. Real intentionality is a far different sort of union; it is a union which involves a kind of identity—the identity of subject and object on an intelligible plane, a union which is entirely diverse from any on the material plane; it is not a quasi-physical bond, but the highest and most intense form of life. In intentionality, the subject becomes the object psychologically, otherwise there could be no awareness of the object; but it could not become the object psychologically unless it were in some way identified with it metaphysically—not by an identity of supposits (which would bring about the contradiction that Avicenna feared), but by a kind of formal "fusion" of an intellective faculty with the intelligible content of the object. In Thomism this union is effected by an immanent operation (in the physical order), an operation self-principiated and self-perfective, self-principiated inasmuch as it is intellective, but determined from without inasmuch as it is cognoscitive of a definite object. This physical operation results in an identity in the intentional order between the intellect and the form it knows. On the other hand, with Avicenna the union is effected by the "injection" of a form into an intellect (or at least into a soul) predisposed for the union but in no way vitally consummating it. But real intentionality, as we have seen,

²⁶ If being is not common analogously to both spirit and matter, philosophy's attempt to find unity among things is foredoomed to failure. But it might be asked if it is legitimate to deny such a community, for if we completely divorce sense knowledge from intellectual knowledge how can we *talk* about sense knowledge at all?

must be much more than this. It requires, as an ontological presupposition, an immanent operation on the part of the knowing subject. For if there is no such operation in the intellective faculty, a man himself cannot be said to know,²⁷ since intellection does not consist merely in the passive reception of a form (for reception is had in any transient action); rather there must be some active assimilation of that form in the production of the concept wherein the mind gives birth, in its own fashion, to the counterpart of the thing it is knowing. Intellection as such is strictly a vital operation, the highest of which man is capable, and formally as intellection must be self-principiated, but as the intellection of a given object must be co-determined by the external thing to which it is adequated.²⁸

Avicenna's solution, then, is really a cloak of the real difficulty. All his stress on preparation and predisposition serves merely to obscure the lacuna between operations on the sense and the intellectual levels, but when we lay bare these operations, our original problem is as vicious as ever. How can an operation in the phantasm affect the possible intellect so as to render it proximate to receiving a form emanating from the lunar intelligence? Why should an ordering of phantasms produce a predisposition, on the intellectual level which is prior to Avicennan "abstraction"?

It was for these reasons that St. Thomas was forced to reject unequivocally Avicenna's theory of cognition. But it must not be concluded from this that Avicenna is of small importance as a philosopher. It is necessary that his position be fully understood and evaluated by anyone who wishes to have a solid grasp on the metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas. St. Thomas is indebted to Avicenna for some very important elements in his metaphysic of being. But another point that must not be overlooked is the influence of Avicenna on the psychological theories of Albert the Great. If St. Albert was almost entirely Avicennan in his metaphysic of knowledge—and this statement can scarcely be controverted—we can begin to understand the difficulties that lay before St. Thomas' synthesis of Aristotle and Plato. St. Thomas cannot be fully understood until we have an accurate picture of the immediate background in which his thought operated, and next to St. Albert himself the key figure is Avicenna.

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²⁷ Then it would seem to follow, since knowing is the operation most perfective of man, that man does not possess his soul in his own right, and what then will become of individual immortality, which Avicenna set out to secure?

²⁸ Cf. Vernon J. Bourke, "The Operations Involved in Intellectual Conception," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXI (January, 1944), pp. 83-89.

PAST ERRORS AND FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

FOR MOST people in the western world the twentieth century dawned hopefully. The nineteenth century had been an era of great material progress, but it had been more: it had seen great figures in literature, in the arts, in philosophy, in music, and in religion. Men hoped for even greater leaders and greater strides in material progress in the twentieth century. They had faith in a widespread humanitarianism which would curb the cruelties of other ages; involuntary suffering would be greatly mitigated by the progress of medicine and biological research. Life too would be more comfortable, more urbane. Order and stability would come through the self-restraint which widespread educational advantages would bring.

The nineteenth century had seen its wars, yet since 1815 no strife had covered great areas of the civilized world. Some prophets predicted an unparalleled era of prosperity and peace. The setting up of the Hague Tribunal had led a few publicists to predict the elimination of future wars through the peaceful means of conciliation and arbitration. Expanding commercial enterprise, it was said, could not tolerate the expense and destructiveness of war. Bankers would not furnish the funds. It was confidently contended that war on a world-wide scale could not even be financed.

The prospects for a universal triumph of democracy never seemed better. In Britain, in France, in the United States, in Scandinavia, and in the Low Countries democracy had made undeniable strides. Men talked of the time when most people would live under governments of their own choosing and directing. Even in countries not generally classified as democratic, democratic movements gained adherents and minor successes. Corruption and graft in the political field, inefficiency of administration, fixing of elections, cumbersome machinery of government, untrained and venal personnel in public offices—all these weaknesses were acknowledged, but they were met by dynamic waves of reform and periodic overhauls. Except for the critics on the far left, few looked for any other outcome than final perfection of the democratic order and with it the temporal salvation of men.

Great empires of trade, manufacturing, and finance had been erected and were growing in strength. Alongside of the growing political democracy there was arising a powerful economic autocracy—never dominated by, but usually dominating, the political order. There appeared, however, to be endless opportunity for all, despite the pro-

found problems of property, unemployment, social welfare, and competition which the new industrialism brought with it. If government was corrupt, business was more corrupt. Yet business could not be adequately controlled by a society that still paid homage to the dogma of *laissez-faire*. Huge fortunes were amassed by toil, chance, or the jungle rule of tooth and claw; the record was kept clean by doling out conscience funds to charities.

GROWTH OF ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM.

Despite all the predictions of unending progress, peace, and prosperity there were ominous portents standing on the threshold of the twentieth century. Nationalism, which had already had a turbulent history of six or seven centuries, was now complicated by economic factors which served to give it a far more sinister appearance than it had shown during the years of dynastic rivalries. To be great in the new era, a nation had to be economically powerful; its people lived behind protective tariff walls and at the same time reached out for markets and raw materials. It may have been the white man's burden to save the souls of colonial natives and to bring them the not unmixed blessings of western civilization, but it seemed in addition to be the white man's destiny to exploit defenseless peoples everywhere. Economic imperialism—hard, determined, and aggressive—had come to supplant the older form of nationalism. Great capitalistic concerns stood behind the expansionist tendencies of governments and looked favorably upon the growing armies and navies built to protect the investor in all parts of the globe. Each great power sought economic predominance over the riches of the earth. While some saw the great danger in these tendencies, others pointed out that the very size of the armies and navies of the Great Powers was a guarantee against their attacking one another.

GROWTH OF ECONOMIC INSECURITY

A second ugly portent noted by surprisingly few was the growing menace of economic insecurity for an ever increasing proletariat. During the nineteenth century there were growing evidences of unrest among urban workers and farmers. Radical agrarianism had alarmed the upper and middle classes of America plentifully in the latter part of the nineteenth century. More revolutionary and persistent were the attacks of the communists, socialists, and anarchists upon the capitalistic order. These attacks had subsided somewhat as the twentieth century dawned due to the good times that ushered in the new century. Yet revolutionary materialism had a tough philosophy and a crusading spirit. Its vicious and destructive exposé of the weaknesses of the

capitalistic system drew converts by the thousands from among the disillusioned and despairing victims of the new mechanized industrial order. Many espoused the Marxist program because pragmatic liberalism offered nothing better than an economic Darwinism of the survival of the fittest. Destructive, violent but consistent, the Marxists' doctrine seemed to many to be the only alternative to the economic insecurity of capitalism.

Religious leaders in their first attacks upon the militant Marxists failed to offer an alternative either to Marxism or to capitalism. Leaders of the working groups often interpreted this as meaning that capitalism in all its words and works was approved by the clergy. To despairing workers this was but one more evidence of the working out in practice of the theory of economic determinism—what were the clergy, but the tools of the exploiters?

The great importance of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on labor lies in its being not only the work of the greatest of Christian teachers of the day, but also in its constructive alternatives to the economic system then prevailing. The Catholic attack upon Communism in our own day has been for the most part ineffective due to its negative nature. Recognition of basic evils in the economic order giving rise to left wing revolutionary movements was essential to a successful meeting of the Marxist challenge. Unemployment, low wages, degrading poverty, and starvation, in a world of large individual fortunes, great wealth, and resources were bound to give rise to resentment and serious unrest. When the Marxist leaders told the workers that the democratic right of suffrage and the right to form unions were mere mirages, there was plenty of evidence to bear out their warnings. The forces of law and order together with the platitudinous middle class leaders appeared in the eyes of the embattled workers as pious hypocrites—smug, complacent defenders of a fundamentally unjust economic system.

PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

If economic thought was confused when the century opened, general philosophic thinking was even more so. In the field of political philosophy the ideas of Hegel and Treitschke received the acclaim of students everywhere. Green and Bosanquet in England and many of the leaders in social thought in America followed the German school of idealist statism with singular devotion. Many American professors at our great centers of learning had sat at the feet of the popular Treitschke when he lectured in Berlin. They absorbed his teachings of the irresponsible omnipotent nation state and in turn they influenced the thinking of hundreds of students who studied with them. Teachers of public law everywhere taught the theory of the absolute sovereign state, source of all law and right. Reacting against erroneous theories of the natural law, prevalent in the nineteenth century, social philosophers rejected the idea of natural law altogether and joined the specialists of

public law in making the state the creator of all law. The brilliant William James had taken an old teaching of the Greek Sophists and in his flawless literary style had given it to the world as the new Pragmatism. It found wide acceptance in a world of rapidly moving events and sweeping innovations. Nothing so fixed as moral standards suited the tastes or ambitions of a people whose minds were obsessed with the millennial idea of unending progress. Even in some Catholic circles Cartesianism had all but completely obscured the perennial philosophy of St. Thomas.

INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH

During the greater part of the nineteenth century and during the years prior to the first world war in the twentieth century, the Church did not exercise much influence outside of her own borders. Exceptions to this statement could be found in the Oxford Movement and certain effects of the reign of the great Pontiff, Leo XIII. Catholics in the democratic nations remained a group apart—a minority, by some suspected, by some tolerated, by some held in low esteem, by many simply ignored. These attitudes further strengthened the aloof and exclusive tendencies of many within the Church. In addition the condemnation by the Church of the militant secularism of liberal movements, was generally interpreted by those outside of the Church as hostility to all democracy. Most unfortunate of all, except in Germany, the economic and social teachings of Pope Leo found all too few adherents and vigorous proponents among Catholics themselves.

RESUME

At the doorstep of the twentieth century, then, certain definite problems were left by the preceding century. Chief among these were: (1) the control of nationalism, now offering a serious threat in the form of economic imperialism; (2) the control of economic enterprise in such a way as to bring about its social usefulness and social responsibility; (3) a recognition of the world-wide nature of social and economic problems, as one nation after another ceased to be self-sufficient; (4) a solution for the problems of the worker—insecure in health, working conditions, income, and even in life itself; (5) an acceptance of minimum standards of right and justice in all relationships among men.

EFFECTS OF WORLD WAR I

In one sense wars do not settle anything. War is a destructive institution that may remove or punish men and states that stand in the way of peace and justice. The crucial question after the war as to what constructive and painstaking methods for the maintenance of peace are

to be explored and adopted determines to a large extent the value of the destructive effort. The disastrous failure following World War I to correct the more obvious weaknesses in world society brought a second cataclysm before the twentieth century was half over. The conclusion of a great war brings special problems which sometimes hide the long-standing problems which have faced men for generations.

The widespread maladjustments in social and economic life following the first World War defied all efforts to get "back to normalcy." Strong government seemed necessary in order to avert a complete social collapse. Even in those countries having a long tradition of stable government, many expressed doubts of the survival of the liberal democratic order. Dictatorship with startling rapidity supplanted responsible constitutional government in several European states.

An examination of these dictatorships and their operation, particularly those which we may classify under the heading of right wing totalitarianism, shows an exaggeration of the main tendencies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. First among these was nationalism which, with certain fantastic adaptations, right wing totalitarianism took on as a religion. Along with this the dictatorships followed the high-tariff exponents, but preaching an autarchy or self-sufficiency that would have made of each nation an exclusive community shut off not only from the material goods of the outside world but from its wealth of ideas as well. Even Fichte would have blushed to have seen how far his ideas of national self-sufficiency had been carried.

Economic imperialism reared its head in more ugly forms than before, backed by the power of great military machines and adopting new means and techniques for seizing world trade. "It (the State)," said Mussolini, "leads men from primitive tribal life to that highest expression of human power which is Empire." The story of the international cartels in which Germany turned up as the favored partner has yet to be fully written.

The dictatorships scored their greatest triumphs in offering to the oppressed working classes that security for which they had been battling. True, it was economic security at the expense of political, social, and sometimes religious liberty, but it guaranteed a job—even if it was in the army. There would be no unemployment and no strikes, a promise which brought smiles of approval from many industrialists. There would be a corporate state in which labor and capital would be partners, a promise that fooled many a good Catholic, to say nothing of many an anti-Catholic who thought that the dictators had learned their ideas of corporationism from the Church.

The totalitarian states followed the pragmatic line of thought so dear to many people in the pre-war years. Totalitarianism was, as Professor

Elliott so wisely said, the pragmatic revolt in politics. It was to be bound by no standards or dogmas, moral or otherwise. "We do not believe in dogmatic programs," wrote Mussolini, "in that kind of rigid frame which is supposed to contain and sacrifice the changeable, the changing, and the complex reality. . . . We permit ourselves the luxury of being aristocrats and democrats, conservatives and progressives, reactionaries and revolutionaries, legalitarians and illegalitarians, according to circumstances of time, place, and environment." Within this pragmatic framework, however, the state was just as supreme as the nineteenth century social and legal thinkers would have it; Alredo Rocco, apologist for Fascism, spoke of "liberty, being like any other individual right, a concession of the state," and declared, "The latter (the individual) is deprived of all useless and possibly harmful freedom, but retains what is essential; the deciding power in this question cannot be the individual, but the state alone." Giovanni Gentile, the philosophic father of Fascism put the matter more concretely when he said, "Fascism has its own solution of the paradox of liberty and authority. . . . The authority of the state is absolute. It does not compromise, it does not bargain, it does not surrender any portion of its field to other moral or religious principles which may interfere with the individual conscience." The denial of the natural laws had grave political consequences for men. Democracy, freedom, justice, among men and nations had no meaning without that law. A large part of mankind did not deny this law, but there was no organizing force to bring them together in support of it.

Finally the exaltation before the war of the powerful nation state—a state, sovereign, independent, and irresponsible—had in the post-war era given us the totalitarian garrison state which denied the realities of political, economic, and social dependence of the nations upon one another. Every calm, dispassionate student had seen this growing independence and could testify to the truth of it by ample testimony. The anarchic international order needed a drastic diminution of nationalism and sovereignty; it needed law and the law needed organization and sanctions behind it. The heroic attempt to organize an international society in a League of Nations, that deserved better treatment than it received at the hands of a Christian world, died because nations refused to make sacrifices of any part of their national sovereignty and independence.

REQUIREMENTS FOR A LASTING PEACE

Considering, then, what our problems are, and having before us the awful consequences of neglecting proper solutions, we may say that in general any lasting peace structure will require as strong a determination to make sacrifices on the part of men and nations as war itself requires. It will require patience and understanding, for the

building of peace will be the work of generations—we of this generation lay but the foundation. The first concept that must be undermined by the long, sure process of education is that narrow, selfish, sensitive, and all-righteous nationalism, which views the people beyond the borders not only as different but as inferior. Here Christian teaching can play the most important part. Unfortunately many Christian and Catholic teachers in the past have been the most vociferous advocates of nationalism. Upon the Catholic, universal Church rests a great responsibility.

The very dependence of many nations for years after the present war upon outside sources for help and life itself will no doubt aid in breaking down mischievous nationalistic tendencies that have plagued the world for many centuries.

Very important for the cause of peace is the proper harnessing of the wild economic forces that have brought destitution within and wars between nations. In the modern world economic power has too often dominated political power. We have seen by past experience how unbridled, irresponsible economic power, free to carry on at will, may upset the life of one nation and in so doing may upset the economic life of the world. We have a long road to travel in order to put our own economic household in order. The transition from war to peacetime economy presents tremendous problems which require at this very moment sagacious *planning*. We cannot solve these problems by walking backwards into the future, or to put it in other words, we cannot expect in this world where the faculty of will plays so dominant a part that things will somehow set themselves in order. An excellent plan for the transition period and for the years ahead has been given to us by the National Resources Planning Board which the Congress abolished in order to take over post-war planning itself. The Congress up to this time, however, has failed to take any steps in this vital matter. Government direction, state and federal, must of necessity, play an important part in our post-war economy. For twelve years following the last war governmental controls were at a minimum; the horrible distress of 1929 should ever stand as a lesson on the evils attendant upon a planless post-war society. Social control of the major economic processes, shared benefits for all to avoid the sinister consequences of economic insecurity, and shared burdens in the form of taxation to prevent the growth of unlimited personal fortunes and to secure men and women against the evils of dependent old age, sickness, and unemployment are but the necessary minimum required in order that internal peace and order be maintained. Already the timid, the selfish, and the reactionary forces are ready with their slogans to mislead the unwary in this struggle for social justice. The good old stand-by's "Socialism" and "Communism" are already being dusted off for use. The current slogan already uttered piously and platitudinously is "free

enterprise"—very often used by those whose conception of free enterprise is freedom to form monopolies to stifle competition.

In the international order the foundation for peace will undoubtedly be built upon the various committees now in operation for the successful prosecution of the War. It is assumed that to the various committees of the United Nations now functioning will be admitted neutral and enemy states after a period of time. The machinery will be far from perfect and will be a constant temptation to narrow minds, reactionary nationalists, peoples with grievances—real and imagined—to carry on guerilla warfare to wreck it altogether. This again will call for the utmost efforts on the part of Christian leaders and far-seeing men of good will everywhere to remind people constantly of the alternative, a rapid descent into another and even costlier war.

Finally, from some sources must come those ultimate standards of right and justice without which peace cannot endure. It has been said by the Supreme Pontiffs that the struggle of the modern world is against not only those who deny the existence of God but against those as well who refuse to accept even the common precepts of the natural law. Catholics alone will not convince these people of their grievous error. Only in the united strength of all men of good will who guide their lives by the common standards of morality will conviction be brought to the unbelieving. This then means an immediate and effective cooperation of Catholics with individuals and groups who accept the moral law. It means common action. It means the common formation of a basic leaven which will permeate all of modern society. Common action for social welfare, for peace, for racial and religious understanding, for universal charity is the challenge presented to Catholics today. One writer has used the phrase, "It Is Later Than You Think" as a title for his book. That phrase applies to common action. Calamity is ours today; victory will be ours tomorrow. Are the forces of charity and justice organized and ready for that victory? If it is necessary to be prepared for the proper economic, social, and political action, how much more important is it to be prepared for moral action? In this land already the forces of hate are spreading abroad their tracts against Jew, Negro, and Catholic. What is our reply? Are we not, perhaps, victims of the politician's paralyzing *caution*, confusing it with the virtue of *prudence*? Even with the first hour of victory the forces of blind hate, greed, and selfishness may divide the very forces that might now act in common. If hate and denial of the moral law wreck the peace after this war the responsibility will not lie altogether upon the shoulders of the unrighteous. How much of that responsibility will rest upon Catholics who are too cautious to do good?

Don Luigi Sturzo, excellent scholar and brave leader of democratic forces in Italy, gives us a concise summary of the task before us:

"What must today be stressed for all men of good faith, whether Christians or no, is that the great battles to be fought in the present period are three, and that they can neither be joined nor won save through a deeply Christian spirit. The first is against the pantheistic totalitarian State, which seeks to absorb all human activity, even that of the spirit, into the political power and system. The second is against the exploiting capitalism that perverts the function of money to the detriment of the community at large and of the poorer classes. The third is for an international construction of justice and peace strong enough to avert any war. In all three cases it is a battle against the naturalism that has entered into the fiber of modern society. In all three cases it is the spirit of love, of brotherhood, of solidarity that must prevail."¹

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¹ *The True Life* (Washington: Catholic University Press; Paterson, N. J.: St. Anthony Guild Press), pp. 266-267.

FOR SELF-EXAMINATION OF NEOSCHOLASTICS

IT IS a chastening experience to read again the suggestions offered almost twenty years ago by non-Scholastics in Zyburg's *Present Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism*. In many respects the situation described therein has not improved noticeably. From the reviews of the *Proceedings* of the American Catholic Philosophical Association and of other Neoscholastic publications in various philosophical journals, one gathers that the breach has not been lessened in any important way. Complaint is still being made about technical difficulties of vocabulary, Latin sources, and a stilted presentation of content; yet the shortcomings here are rather evenly distributed among the adherents of the older school and their more recent critics. No more serious linguistic preparation is required to study Aristotle and Aquinas than is demanded of any self-respecting investigator for the proper understanding of Plotinus or Bruno or Spinoza. And the rigorous discipline in consequential reasoning entailed by an initiation into symbolic logic is only equalled by the strenuous effort required to grasp the new and often apparently arbitrary meanings that writers like Santayana and Heidegger assign to familiar terms. Yet where criticism on stylistic and technical grounds is sincerely intended, rather than an evasion of scholarly and deep-thinking criticism of profoundly difficult matters, a hampering weakness in the spread of the Scholastic movement in America is uncovered. No William James has yet arisen to present the traditional synthesis in a persuasive colloquial way that seems to carry its own guarantee of native authenticity and relevance for men of our time and country.

Yet the real indictment goes much deeper. It has to do not so much with the external apparatus and mode of expression as with the content which the framework supports and the style expresses. Grounds for dissatisfaction appear precisely in that department in which Scholastics have made the greatest advance during the past quarter-century and in which recognition has been most readily given to their contributions—the department of historical research. Here the results published in such series as Bauemker's *Beiträge* and Gilson's *Archives* as well as the individual accomplishments of Baur, Grabmann, Gilson, Masnovo and others have firmly established research into medieval thought as a legitimate and valuable aspect of the general scientific development of the history of philosophy. A similarly sympathetic reception has been accorded the better doctoral dissertations and other studies appearing in this country. Yet this

admission of competency in historical science should not blind modern Scholastics to a widespread attitude on the more pertinent question of truth, an attitude that may be expressed bluntly in two propositions: (a) The *philosophical* worthwhileness and relevance of the historical study of Scholasticism is questionable. (b) The sincere commitment of Scholastic thinkers to the contemporary philosophical effort is incomplete.

When advanced by responsible and widely heeded men, these charges deserve serious consideration and even call for an examination of philosophical conscience. There are some grounds for this fairly common impression; it cannot be chalked up entirely to prejudice and misunderstanding. This challenge becomes particularly insistent just when American Scholastics are also being asked to carry almost the full burden of research formerly carried by European scholars, and when all philosophical schools in our country are being summoned to the common task of shaping the nation's outlook on basic issues arising from the war and the future needs of our civilization. This testing of one's philosophical mettle at a crucial time is salutary, for it brings to light the shortcomings of past performances and the gravity of the present reconsideration. What is at stake now is the right of Scholasticism to occupy a place in the contemporary philosophical scene and to receive serious hearing on its own merits. It must justify its claim of making a major contribution to sound thinking and living, for the value of what Scholastics have to offer has been basically questioned.

Some of the agenda for the modern Schoolman are suggested here with special regard for the two counts mentioned above.

I. FOR THE HISTORICAL STUDY OF SCHOLASTICISM

That part of any proposed program of revision which deals with methods and materials is fairly clear. So far as can be done in war-time and in a bomb-shattered world thereafter, the work of preparing critical editions of medieval Latin manuscripts must be carried on and extended beyond the two or three centers of paleographical studies presently active. All substantial advances in our knowledge suppose that this indispensable spadework will continue and find readier outlets for publication than were available before *Speculum*, *Medieval Studies*, *Traditio*, and the Notre Dame series began to appear. Much valuable research along particular lines embodied in doctoral dissertations could be made more accessible to students generally, were the necessary support given to these expensive undertakings. Because the conception of what the doctoral dissertation should achieve differs widely from university to university, no comprehensive discussion of accomplishments and failures in this field can be attempted. Our con-

cern is rather with the subsequent results of independent productive scholarship that are more widely circulated and that could be even more extensively known if published in journals other than Scholastic. In-breeding is sometimes evidenced by a reluctance to submit work to any editors other than those in one's own coterie. If, for instance, the approach of Lovejoy and the *Journal of the History of Ideas* were applied to the fundamental Scholastic concepts, they would be better appreciated in their historical sweep, integral relation with actual, cultural background and innumerable ramifications through science, literature, and social institutions. In this way the unreal treatment of these vital themes in abstract isolation from other human interests could be replaced by a truer and more attractive account of their historical growth and content.

A more important point has been made in the introductory lecture to Gilson's *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, where it is noted that the sharp division customarily made between ancient, medieval, and modern philosophy cannot be sustained by detailed arguments. Along this way is opened the second of the two routes to the justification of the study of Scholasticism by contemporaries. In seeking to establish the bearing of traditional views upon recent problems, Olgiati was led to a position concerning Scholasticism somewhat similar to Maritain's defense of Thomism in his programmatic *Antimoderne*. Two moments are involved in the elaboration of a philosophical system: (a) the temporal contingent activities of this thinker or group of thinkers working in a particular cultural setting, and (b) the truth disclosed by their speculation. When the latter is obtained through a deliberate use of the method of proper abstraction, it has a permanent value that is not limited to the circumstances of its origin, passing away when they do or recalled merely as a curious bit of historical information. In a properly philosophical way, the principles and conclusions of a philosophy of being transcend the shift of temporary intellectual climates, not by reason of an alien incommensurability but as dominating them all from within their essential structure. Because their approach is largely in terms of the concrete and evanescent aspects of reality (conceived as being either grasped or produced by the mind), modern philosophies are orientated to the fieristic, accidental, and temporal features which provide an admirable supplement to the deliverance of reason in the classical sense. Conflict need not arise so long as neither group erects its own doctrines into an exclusive report.

For the Scholastic these considerations are sufficiently compelling to establish the need for studying both the older systems and the more recent views. From the former can be derived an organically unified and comprehensive outlook that both expresses truth in its necessary and universal validity and provides a set of lasting criteria

for evaluating other accounts. Modern philosophy is to be studied not as illustrating the anatomy of error but for the unique contributions it offers to a complete understanding of real being. Not barren aloofness but the ability to work along with other schools and to incorporate every sound element they contain is the mark of a truly universal philosophy. The Scholastic then, need not apologize for devoting considerable study to his own doctrines. Neither can a knowledge of them excuse him from giving sympathetic if always critical attention to the developments in modern Western thought. One acute and mature examination of Hume's theory of sense impressions is often worth a ream of pure generalizations on the supratemporal relevance of Scholastic principles. They do enjoy this trait, but the proof here does lie in the practice as well as in a general account of the nature of intellect and its objects.

Yet these observations carry more weight with the Scholastic himself than with the others to whom they are also addressed. They should convince him of his inescapable obligation not only to acquaint himself factually with the course of modern speculation but also to enter into philosophically fruitful communication with these trends. That the doctrines on being and knowing involved in this approach are unacceptable to the regnant empirical temper in our country does not block all attempts at rapprochement. Not only is the simple antithesis between the doctrines of medieval and modern philosophy untenable: the departmentalized version of the history of philosophy which it presupposes is itself only a convenient fiction for expository purposes. The research of Scholastics today should not be concentrated exclusively upon the great figures or upon the high period of medieval thought in the West. At both extremities of the Middle Ages, the continuity of philosophical speculation can be shown only by detailed analyses that are essential for discovering the intelligible pattern in the history of thought. Until the precise manner in which the Fathers and early Scholastics appropriated and critically modified pagan view has been set forth, it will still be possible for historians and publicists to speak of ourselves as the heirs of the Greek theoretical and social tradition in a way that negates fourteen centuries of the Christian transformation of the Western mind.

SCHOLASTIC BEGINNINGS OF MODERN PHILOSOPHIES

If the facile contrast between medieval and modern philosophy so exaggerates the points of difference and the discontinuity that conversation in a common idiom seems to be precluded, a good portion of the responsibility rests upon the Scholastic investigators who have left in obscurity the later phases of medieval thought and who have neglected to expose the historical roots of key figures like Nicolas of

Cusa, Descartes, Bacon, Ficino, and Hobbes. The pioneer work done in this direction by the European scholars requires supplementing in order to show how the experience of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries was decisive in determining the problems studied and the solutions offered thereafter. When the sensism, idealism, and subjectivism of later times are seen in the perspective of the philosophical history of philosophy to be necessary prolongations of positions assumed during this critical span, then the possibility of discussion between Scholastic and non-Scholastic is not so remote, and its need becomes greater. It is on the ground of history, with the lessons of genesis and repetitive laws of development it contains, that the new terrain for collaboration must be established. For otherwise the ordinary account of modern philosophy (such as Cassirer's) as a totally new and exclusive concern with the theory of knowledge cannot be shown to be excessively one-sided and short-memored.

If so many conflicting opinions are traceable to certain teachings in the metaphysics, logic, and ethics of the later Schoolman, then it is not unreasonable to conclude with Pegis that the seeds of conflict must have been already present in the parent doctrines. And it also follows that the lessons gained from studying the philosophical fortunes of that period will give us some hint of the principles upon which a true concordance that avoids compromise can be built. The philosophical meaning of the Middle Ages should be reconsidered in view of the well-known and as yet not definitely settled dispute between Gilson and De Wulf on the nature of Augustinism and of medieval Scholasticism generally, for this bears directly upon the question of the relative permanence of the problems of existence and knowledge in the history of philosophy. In what sense is it philosophically permissible to include the views of such divergent thinkers as Bonaventure and Aquinas, Scotus and Ockham, under a common heading remains a disputed question, the consequences of which are important for grasping the dialectic of later thought. And when the Latin West is kept apart from the influx of Jewish and Arabian ideas, the growth of anti-Scholastic notions in Europe continues to remain unexplained and the means for reconciliation unrecognized. Historical works meeting the needs of our times can no longer confine their attention to one great Scholastic statically considered or to the whole body of Western thought unrelated to the philosophies of the Mohammedan world as they adapted and transmitted Aristotle and Neo-Platonism.

While the historical tissue of Scholasticism is to be respected and its central position in the main stream of Western philosophy indicated, yet the temptation to see its mark everywhere must be resisted. It is in and through the irreducibly unique insight of each thinker and school that the continuity of speculation is maintained and its recur-

rent laws exhibited. The analogical application of permanent truths requires as a correlate that scrupulous regard for nuance and subtle differentiation which characterizes the modern historical method. Only the most skilful and broadly informed appraisal of post-Renaissance philosophical achievements in the light of Thomistic principles can avoid the dangers of partisan judgment and unwarranted extension.

II. FOR SCHOLASTICISM AS A CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

Manifoldness, variety of opinions, and rich diversity are highly prized notes today, even when the craving for unity of outlook is also mounting. While it would be fatal to the harmony of society and of the human mind to cultivate opposition for its own sake, nevertheless the extent to which legitimate difference of approach and report can flourish alongside a basic oneness admits of further exploration by all parties in the contemporary philosophical community. The historical experiment of Scholasticism in this regard is invaluable for suggesting the way to a working agreement among all ideological forces in our country today. Three distinct lines of research are open here, each of which must be carefully exploited if any unanimity among the various American groups is to be created.

1. SCHOOLS WITHIN "THE SCHOOL"

Not only during the medieval phase of Scholasticism, but also during the later centuries and in our own time there have always been various schools differing not merely in this or that doctrine but in their total account. The Thomistic, Scotistic, and Suarezian revivals are witness to lasting differences in Scholastic approaches to reality. Even apart from theological controversies, or rather at the metaphysical basis of these disputes concerning the supernatural life, there are grave cleavages of a philosophical nature separating these traditions in a decisive way. Just as a study of the psychological and metaphysical constants involved in all heresies aids in understanding the dissident mentality and the logic of autarchic systematization, so the way in which conflicting opinions can flourish together within the Scholastic camp can provide some hint of the *modus vivendi* American philosophies are seeking to present. Of what sort is the basic minimum upon which men must agree in order to co-operate efficiently both in the pursuit of truth and in the construction of a social order reflecting common convictions? The nature of philosophical pluralism is becoming a pressing issue in a way reminiscent of the earlier concern about religious, social, and economic differentiation within a single geographical or political unit. Scholastics must be in the forefront of this discussion, for they can speak from several centuries of experience within their own ranks as well as between Schol-

asticism and all the philosophies that have arisen in Europe. The relations established with Cartesianism, Kantianism, and the other great systematic traditions serve as a guide to the contemporary attempt at mutual understanding and practical enlistment of various groups in the general work of shaping the good life.

An importunate duty imposed by the present philosophical situation upon American Scholastics, however, is to review the accomplishments of the past half-century from this standpoint. While the consistency and comprehensiveness of Scholastic systems are often advanced as supplying a center of unified order in the midst of a philosophical Babel, this claim often arouses the suspicion that Scholastics in their united front pretend to know all the answers, recognize no further problems, and wish to be excused from the *search* for truth. Not only from general principles can it be shown that unity does not entail regimented uniformity and that organic totality does not preclude a constant assimilative operation, but also—and more convincingly—by indicating the actual practice in our own day. It is well to acquaint others with the lively controversies among Scholastics concerning the natural desire men have for God, the validity and formulation of the causal principle, the relation of individual to person and community, the esthetic experience, the constitution of matter in view of the metaphysics of act and potency, the foundation of values, and other disputed points of contemporary interest. The polar tension that sustains contrasts without dissolving into contradiction is the normal mode of Scholasticism's internal progress as a dedicated attempt to penetrate the mystery of being ever more profoundly on the basis of principles and truths already acquired.

Even more instructive as instancing the receptiveness and willingness of Scholasticism to engage jointly in the process of discovery are the cases in which exponents of the traditional position have joined with their contemporaries for the investigation of new problems and methods. Here again the first step for American Scholastics can only be to recall and profit by the example of their European colleagues. Because of Kant's enormous influence upon recent philosophy, Mercier and Sentroul at Louvain submitted his epistemological doctrines to close study in order to understand their guiding principles and procedure. While the conclusion was mainly negative and in favor of a renewed Aristotelian-Thomistic notion of reason and cognition, still they maintained that realism requires a critical justification to avoid the charge of naiveté. Further advances in this direction were made by Noël, Picard, Roland-Gosselin, Jolivet, Romeyer and others more or less closely associated with the Louvain School. Their views on the nature of realism and the scope of the theory of knowledge were vigorously opposed by Gilson in France and Olgiati in Italy. The latter scholar joined issue with Zamboni, whose critical exegesis of

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is a systematic exposition of Aquinas in Kantian terms. More synthetical and original in conception was the fifth volume of Maréchal's study on the point of departure of metaphysics, *Thomism and the Critical Philosophy*, where the apriori structure of cognitional dynamism was exposed in relation to man's appetite for God and for being. In turn, this volume has been a storm center variously estimated as an epochal advance by its supporters and as a surrender to transcendental subjectivity by Nink and Przywara. Whatever the final appraisal, the work of Noël and Maréchal is admittedly in the vanguard of recent epistemological studies, contributing as much to the renewed interest in Kant as the latest contributions by their idealist contemporaries, Lachîèze-Rey and Vleeschauwer.

Max Scheler, the *enfant terrible* of the philosophical Germany of the twenties, passed through several phases in his ideological career. One stage in his development was popularly termed his Catholic period. Reviewers of his work *On the Eternal in Man* such as Mayer, Schwarz, and Kracauer, were convinced that his purpose was to deduce the main doctrines of Christianity—the Fall, a supernatural elevation, the Church itself, and eternal beatitude—by a philosophical method. Later students of Scheler seem to have overlooked the fact that probably his most penetrating expositors were Scholastics like Przywara, Geyser, and Rohner. Yet these thinkers were also his severest critics, being largely responsible for the clarification of Scheler's own thought and consequently for his evolution to a position further removed from Catholic doctrine and ultimately issuing in the pantheism of *Man's Place in the Cosmos*. In the appendix to a comparative study of Scheler's and Newman's philosophies of religion, Przywara offers a critique of the so-called New Catholic Intuition School of Hessen and Laros which sought to review the epistemological teachings of Augustine, Pascal, and Newman in the light of our modern concern with the critical problem. Considerable precision has since been introduced into the elusive notion of immediate intuition, nor can any American gnoseology afford to neglect the observations of Scholastics like Hufnagel, Peghaire, and Roland-Gosselin on this important if obscure factor in cognition.

2. A NON-SCHOLASTIC CATHOLIC TRADITION

But another significant aspect of this Intuition School must be noted: its emphasis upon a Catholic but non-Scholastic philosophical tradition. From the constant testimony of popes and councils as well as from the prescriptions of Canon Law, the favored position of Scholasticism and especially of Thomistic doctrines is evident. Such preference does not deny but rather supposes the presence of other philosophical schools within the Catholic family that are at least com-

patible with Christian doctrine, even though the Church does not consider them to be of as great apologetic value as Scholasticism. In France the Augustinian approach to philosophy through concrete meditation upon man's actual condition and aspirations has always been predominant, finding worthy proponents today in Blondel, Chevalier, and Marcel. The best elements in Bergson, Husserl, Jaspers, and Heidegger have been incorporated into the syntheses of these thinkers, who demonstrate by their example that a regard for orthodox belief in no way handicaps a sincere mind grappling with contemporary problems in all their living urgency. Nor are German Neo-Scholastics alone in examining the foundations of the new philosophy of existence, for this movement has been evaluated from another viewpoint as well by Catholic philosophers. Indeed, from the time of its introduction to Germany with the translation of Kierkegaard's works, existentialism has been developed in a new way by Haecker (also one of the most competent translators of the Danish writer), Wust, and Ebner. This Christian philosophy of existence is a powerful alternative to the tendency of Heyse and others to dissolve rigorous philosophy into myths and arbitrary *Weltanschauungen*. Here is one solid point of contact with the German mind that can, like Scholasticism, preserve the required association with the West against separatist tendencies without repudiating any genuine autochthonic values.

The relevance of this current of thought for the present inquiry is seen when the contention is recalled that Scholasticism is prevented by its Christian affiliation from effectively participating in the secular quest of philosophy. Christian doctrine does not of itself exclude non-Scholastic philosophies, nor can this exclusivism be justly attributed to Scholasticism. Just as the latter does not seek acceptance philosophically because of its close ties with theology, so it does not forfeit philosophical honesty and the privilege of engaging in the progressive human attainment of natural wisdom. This is so in principle and intention. If the case has seemed otherwise to some American philosophers, it is because in practice many Scholastics have neglected to discuss actual problems in an inquiring spirit. Moreover, the conditions for possible co-operation and eventual reconciliation have not been set in precise terms. On this score, the most immediate needs seem to be a re-opening of the question of the nature of Christian philosophy with regard for the American situation, a careful study of recent forms of non-Scholastic Christian thought, and a clear statement of the extent to which variation is admitted in the understanding and presentation of doctrines constituting the philosophical minimum for collaboration. This program is not unlike that which Aquinas set himself in the face of medieval fideism and rationalism.

A reconsideration today of the relations between faith and reason is imperative for achieving philosophical unity without compromising the integrity of any party.

3. PHILOSOPHIA PERENNIS?

Behind all these issues lies a *quaestio disputanda*, upon the resolution of which depends the success of this entire irenic project. How are philosophical pluralism and unity to be harmonized? It is the insistent problem of the relation between philosophies and philosophy itself, the determination of what factors common to many schools permit them to be classed together as philosophical views. A particular conception of the nature of philosophy is usually operative where Scholasticism is looked upon askance. But just as important today as the investigation of the meaning of philosophy is the probing of the respective roles of progress and tradition, quest and permanence in the philosophical way. The claim that what Leibniz termed *perennis quaedam philosophia* and Scholasticism are equivalent has been too long taken for granted by Schoolmen and unheeded by other thinkers. The former must establish the import and extent of this proposed identification, while the latter cannot overlook the importance of continuity with the philosophical heritage of mankind that Scholasticism in large measure conveys and contemporizes.

In the notion of a perennial philosophy lies the escape from both systematic imperialism and anchorless progressivism. This supposes that collaboration is not only directed mutually between Scholasticism and other views, but that all schools are related as well to a single central deposit of wisdom of which they are the partial and diverse bearers. If this conception has any validity, however, it must avoid that same exaggerated realism that vitiated Hegel's version of the history of philosophy. During the past century there has been a reaction towards extreme factual empiricism which allows for little more than a nominalistic generalization concerning philosophy and the philosophical tradition simply. While utilizing the great accretions to our knowledge of the historical particulars of the philosophical past, Scholastics should examine the meaning of the *philosophia perennis* and contribute their share towards specifying its content and range. This indirect way of communication may bring Scholastics and their contemporaries closer together than is possible along some of the more direct ways that have been proposed or tried. All avenues for achieving intellectual amity must be opened and travelled if philosophy is to survive and fulfil its rightful directive function in our time.

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EDITORIAL NOTES

THE PRELUDE to any possible rapprochement between Scholastic and non-Scholastic philosophers is certainly mutual understanding. Such an understanding should be one which proceeds fundamentally from a correct historical perspective of the logical evolution of the modern philosophical mind. As Mr. James Collins points out in his article, modern philosophy has its roots in the Scholasticism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is in the decadent Scholastic thought of that period that the bridge between the old and the new is to be found. It is only in relation to this period of decline that the Cartesian metaphysic is fully intelligible, just as it is only in relation to the Cartesian metaphysic that the subsequent development of rationalism and sensism, which culminated in Kantian idealism, can be seen in its proper perspective.

If any good is to come from mutual discussion, it must come from discussion of metaphysical principles, and, in particular, of those principles which are the foundation of conflicting theories of cognition. It is of little use to quibble about conclusions that flow from contradictory premises. They are simply the deductions to which the mind *must* conclude. The premises themselves must be examined and a metaphysics established which is based on the nature of existential reality. The study of sources seems to be a sure and necessary beginning. The possibility of arriving at a metaphysics which is essentially the same for both Scholastic and non-Scholastic may seem a vain hope; but unless it is realized to some extent, rapprochement will never be anything more than a nice word.



In laying plans for the foundation upon which the post-war world is to be established we think that it can hardly be over-emphasized that the existence of an absolute norm of truth must be taken as the cornerstone. Unless we proceed from that supposition, the "freedoms" for which we are fighting have no meaning. When the state, for example, must decide in a specific case what is in harmony with such a thing as religious freedom and what is a violation of that freedom, it must do so in relation to the nature of freedom and the rights which all men possess independently of any state or court of law. Unless a state recognizes the independent existence of such rights and

acts in accordance with them, freedom has no more meaning than that which a group of individuals choose to give it. It will do no good whatever to decry totalitarianism and insist on inalienable rights, unless at the same time we admit an objective standard according to which a man may enjoy certain rights and privileges simply because he is a man. Only after we have accepted such a standard can the word "freedom" have any meaning; and only in relation to such a standard can the state legitimately punish acts which it judges to be no longer free but licentious. It is the worst kind of philosophical inconsistency to preach freedom and inalienable rights and in the same breath deny the only thing which can give any meaning to the terms—an absolute standard of truth.



The Jesuit Philosophical Association has recently sent out a questionnaire to all professors of philosophy in Jesuit colleges and universities with a view to determining the place of philosophy in liberal education. The inquiry is being made as a means of cooperating with the American Philosophical Association, which has received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation for a commission on the function of philosophy in liberal education. The task of the commission is to "examine thoroughly the nature and function of philosophy in higher education and in general culture, and to study ways and means of reorganizing the teaching of philosophy in order to make the contribution of philosophy to the post-war world most effective."



It will be of interest to Thomistic scholars to note that a complete analytical list of the more important publications in the field of Thomistic studies from 1920 to 1940 is being compiled by Dr. Vernon J. Bourke, Associate Professor of Philosophy at St. Louis University. The volume supplements the *Bibliographie Thomiste* published in 1921 by Mandonnet and Destrez and makes available a source of accurate references to the Thomistic literature of these last twenty years.



The editors invite comment from the reader on anything that may appear in this journal.

H. R. K.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE ONE GOD: a Commentary on the First Part of St. Thomas' *Theological Summa* by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., translated by Dom. Bede Rose, O.S.B. B. Herder, 1943. Pp. v + 763. \$6.00.

The first twenty-six questions of the first part of the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas are concerned with the existence, the nature, and the attributes of God. Being the first complete commentary in English upon those topics—so far as I know—this book will fill a need of teachers of Natural Theology.

Nor will the general reader fail to profit by this book. If, as the translator maintains in his Preface, the age-long struggle of the Church against the forces of evil is now focussed upon the defense of that doctrine upon which all religion and morality are based, the existence of a personal, infinite, eternal God; if the time of probing Catholic defenses is over and the main attack is now ready to be launched against the citadel of Theology, any man within that fortress must look to its defenses, see their strength, and face the future with a confidence based upon an intellectual conviction that there is a God, unique, infinite, and provident.

But the general reader will have his difficulties with this book—not with its structure, not with its style, although the style is not swift and light and strong, as Father Farrell's. The general reader and, who knows, perhaps even the technical theologian may feel the lack of something which I cannot define, though I shall attempt to illustrate it. No doubt I shall be considered anti-Thomistic in the following illustrations, selected more or less at random, but I do not mean to be.

Suarez misunderstood the proofs of God's existence (p. 136 and footnote 111). *Soit!* Let's have no more of his or any one else's misunderstandings. Suarez thought that a proof could not be metaphysical if it began with the physical, e.g. with motion. Nevertheless, it is no defense against Suarez to suggest that the proof is metaphysical because it does *not* begin with the physical: "There is not one of these proofs that is deduced from objects of the sensible or physical order . . ." (p. 136). It will be said that my protest is based upon my misunderstanding of the word "deduced." I know, I know. Still, the statement of the author is, or tends to be, misleading.

Then there is the vexed question of God's knowledge. Molina says he never could quite "get" the presentiality notion of St. Thomas, and anyhow he never liked it. So much the worse, a Thomist must say, for Molina. Again, *soit!* But neither did Bannez quite appreciate the presentiality notion of St. Thomas. Bannez writes: "Etiam si Deus non cognosceret futura contingentia tamquam praesentia in sua aeternitate sed solum in causis ipsorum, eius cognitio esset certa et infallibilis." Despite the contrary-to-fact condition, despite the fact that, set in the context of Bannez' complete doctrine, such a text must not be allowed to vitiate the sound Thomism in Bannez' exposition, nevertheless such a way of talking is simply, as Dr. Pegis observes (article on Molina in *Jesuit Thinkers of the Renaissance*, Marquette U. Press, 1939), asking for trouble. Perhaps it might be well, in the interest of Thomism, to divorce some of Dominic

Bannez' notions from St. Thomas'. There are *two* factors of divine causality in St. Thomas: God's will and intellect. Bannez knew that, of course. But in such delicate matters he should not talk betimes as if he didn't. (That also is a contrary-to-fact condition.) Nor should the author (p. 457, *Reply*).

There is lastly a brief discussion on pages 138 and 139 as to the number of Thomistic proofs, one or five. This discussion is not wholly satisfactory. It is too short and does not seem to appreciate fully the issues involved.

In sum, since we are all, presumably, willing to "settle for St. Thomas," it is good that we have now available a commentary in English upon that greatest of theologians' doctrine concerning the existence and nature of God. This commentary will serve, excellently, until the trifling shortcomings I have illustrated (there are more) are eliminated.

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WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY? by Charles Clayton Morrison (The Lyman Beecher Lectures for 1939 at Yale University). *Willett, Clark & Company*, 1940. Pp. ix + 324. \$3.00.

"By the Christian church, I mean that particular human community whose historical continuum extends as far back as the beginnings of the Hebrew people . . . which passed, in the immediate presence of Jesus of Nazareth and by virtue of his life and work, into a community of the remnant of Israel, and which finally became the superracial and inclusive community which we know specifically as the Christian church."

"The Christian church is the revelation of God in history." But this revelation is called *ineffable, transcendent*. It "is not . . . a body of ideas, nor a book containing ideas" (the Bible). "God's revelation is his action, his creative and redemptive working in history, not his dictation of thoughts to men's minds . . ."—not any creed, code, or cult, for these are human *ideology*. "Every doctrine of Christianity . . . is a human construct . . . We can make no exception even of such basic doctrines as the fatherhood of God and the Incarnation."

The Incarnation is not to be conceived as "an event . . . dropped down into history by 'the decisive irruption of the Divine into history.' . . . Those who go outside history to explain the Incarnation are actuated, as I see it, by a false view of history . . . a history that is a bare succession of occurrences, a cause-and-effect history . . . that goes on apart from God."

It is surely true, as the author says, that God does work *in* history with free man and that Providence is a reality in the ongoing stream of events. But what justifies the assumption that there is no providential cause *above* history? Why can not the First Cause intervene by way of events just as real as the continuum? Why would God's freely coming into history, presenting cognoscible truths upon which men may freely act, be repugnant to either divinity or humanity?

Adequate criticism of these lectures would involve a number of very basic questions. Scholastic philosophers will find that Dr. Morrison's implied principles differ abruptly from their own, even in such matters as the nature of reality and truth, the reliability of human knowledge, the nature of philosophy. For the most part, when speaking of "concrete" Christianity, he avoids the language of causality and intellectual truth. He

speaks of emerging, becoming, the "given" of historical continua; he brands most of the realities dealt with by man's mind as either abstractions or ideology. Since causes, essence, purpose, as well as scientific history are ruled out, it is rather awkward to consider *what* Christianity is. The author investigates what most people regard as a religion without mentioning God's or man's reason for it.

The lectures allow Christ, who "received the total content of his mind" from Israel's continuum, a very cause-like efficiency. To distinguish his continuum-church as *Christian*, the author tolerates this inconsistency as well as that of accepting *some* of Christ's "ideology," for example, the Lord's Supper as the "numinous dramatization of unity," and baptism. Likewise, Paul is granted an authoritative position as the interpreter of membership in the Body of Christ. However, it is convenient for Dr. Morrison to ignore the same apostle's understanding of the church's members with diverse and unequal functions, and to pass over the institution by Christ of authoritative, inerrant, ministering hierarchy. He charges: "The Roman Catholic Church abandoned the essential genius of the Christian community as, in its totality, the bearer of God's revelation, and vested the divine revelation and grace in a part of the community . . . an autonomous hierarchy."

That the editor of a well known Protestant publication is extremely candid in his severe criticism of sectarianism purely commands respect. It is unfortunate that this laborious study could not have proceeded free of immanentist and agnostic premises.

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SOCIOCULTURAL CAUSALITY, SPACE, TIME *by* Pitirim A. Sorokin.
Duke University Press, 1943. Pp. v + 246. \$3.50.

This book deals with the methodological and epistemological problems which have in recent years beset Catholic and non-Catholic sociologists alike. Though most Catholic social scientists have felt that the categories of the natural sciences and their quantitative methods of research are thoroughly inadequate means of "understanding" specifically "social" phenomena, they have not as yet been able to prove convincingly the relative autonomy of the social sciences in general and of sociology in particular. Not a few of them see only *one* alternative to the rejection of the natural science approach to "sociocultural" phenomena, namely, assigning sociology to philosophy, which is equivalent to despairing of the possibility of a sociology *sui generis* as distinct from social philosophy and ethics.

Sorokin, though concentrating on a demonstration of the radical difference between the concepts of causality, space, and time in the social and the natural sciences, leaving the problem of the relationship between the social sciences and philosophy in the background, indirectly attempts to establish the independence of sociology as a science.

His "integralist" sociology may indeed be regarded as a stepping stone towards a new sociology, methodologically purified and more fruitful than the "imitative social science" of the present. Catholics will appreciate Sorokin's companionship in arms against the prevailing confusion of the "formal objects." However, this reviewer cannot help having the impression that the author tends toward the other extreme, opposite to that of our present-day sociological positivism and materialism. His "integralism"

seems to be somewhat spiritualistic, in that the psycho-physical nature of man is not sufficiently taken into account. Is it permissible to see in this a reflection of the accentuated "pneumatic" attitude of the Orthodox Christian? One may wonder also whether an application of the scholastic concept of the four causes (material, efficient, formal, final) would not further elucidate the relationship between physical and social phenomena and categories. Rev. P. H. Furfey rightly stated recently (cf. *The Modern Schoolman*, XXI (March, 1944), p. 154) that it cannot be denied that the "imitation by sociologists of the methods of the physical sciences" has also had some beneficial results. Such "imitation" is indeed not always necessarily the product of a pernicious attitude of mind or of ignorance. It may sometimes be born of a notion, probably indistinct, of the analogy of being, or rather, out of the realization of the inadequacy of human concepts in the sphere of "spiritual" phenomena, as well as out of an honest desire to secure for the social sciences the same degree of certitude which the so-called exact sciences possess, overlooking the fact that wherever the free will of man is involved such certitude can never be achieved.

It is hard to see why Sorokin makes no reference to the concept of "Geisteswissenschaften" developed by such men as Dilthey, Windelband, and Rickert and applied to sociocultural phenomena by Troeltsch, Meinecke, Scheler (cf. *The Modern Schoolman*, XVI (March, 1939), 51-54), and especially Sombart (cf. esp. the latter's *Weltanschauung, Science and Economy*, New York: 1939). He does refer to Max Weber of the same school, without, however, doing full justice to Weber's pioneer work in this field. We do not expect Sorokin to agree with the concept of "cognitive" or interpretative ("verstehende") cultural science, but to ignore it completely, in spite of its obvious relationship to his own endeavors to understand "systems of meanings," and despite the fact that Sorokin is very well acquainted with this whole school of thought and even personally with some of its leading representatives, is very odd indeed.

This very stimulating book suffers somewhat under its author's exceedingly dogmatic style, its being overloaded with newly coined compound technical terms, and its much too frequent references to the authors' own works. Nevertheless, Professor Sorokin is to be congratulated for his courageous attack which has yielded him among his positivistic American colleagues almost nothing but jeers and highly unfair, biased, and unscientific criticisms. An example of to what vulgarity even professors can lower themselves can be found in a "review" of Sorokin's book in the *American Sociological Review* for August, 1943, p. 497. It will pay to look it up!

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WHY EXHIBIT WORKS OF ART? by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy.
Luzac & Co., London, 1943. Pp. 148. 6 s.

With respect to the general character of this book, there are two remarks that are imperative to a correct interpretation and evaluation of it. In the first place, it is not primarily, as its title might imply, a work on aesthetics, but rather a treatise on general social theory; many questions of an artistic nature are raised and considered, but art is discussed always in the broad context of its social origin and meaning. In the second place, the book, as its sub-title clearly states, is a collection of essays:

hence, it is not and does not pretend to be systematic. There is a central motif, but this does not receive organized treatment; the several essays all expound the same doctrine, but they are meant to illustrate various aspects of it.

It is Mr. Coomaraswamy's basic contention that the modern treatment of art—and more broadly all modern culture—is characterized and vitiated by the error of having drawn too sharply "the social and economic distinction of fine from applied art." The immediate effect of this has been to bring about a divorce of art from "ordinary" or "normal" activity, so that art is reserved for occasions of leisurely enjoyment, and work is planned only for production. This in turn has two vicious consequences: first, it has falsified the position of the artist, and contaminated his art, by pretending to elevate him above the concerns and responsibilities of social communion; and second, it has impoverished the routine of daily labor and economic manufacture by removing from them the stimulus and meaning of purposeful artistic creativeness.

It is with these two subsidiary evils that the author is mainly occupied, and they are discussed again and again in the various papers. The first may be regarded as primarily an aesthetic question; the second is obviously social, and even, as it is here treated, almost religious. With respect to the first, the author argues that, because of the modern distinction between fine and applied art, we are forced into the doctrine of art for art's sake. The work of art comes to be conceived as a pure expression, with no inherent subject matter, no responsibility to either reality or the audience, and hence no meaning. Art thus becomes constantly more esoteric and technical, as artists attempt to express themselves more sensationally; and this culminates in a situation where fine art is unintelligible and vacuous, because dissociated from all objects, events, and processes of the familiar experienced environment. Art, which is meant to adorn and meliorate life, finishes by losing all connection with life. When art is made the private concern of the artist, it ceases to have any public value or function for the wide audience of society.

Turning now to the general social consequences of our cleavage of fine from applied art, Mr. Coomaraswamy contends that in altogether freeing the fine artist we have altogether enslaved the artisan of ordinary producer. We have destroyed the craftsman, that supposed original prototype of artist and artisan, who was always generically the same, a skilled maker of things, whether these were chairs or portraits or saddles or songs. Modern industrial organization degrades the mass of makers—turns them into workers and laborers—because it deprives them of all initiative and responsibility with respect to their products. The industrial worker is a laborer rather than a craftsman because he has no voice in determining the form and structure that are proper to the things he makes, nor in planning the process by which they are manufactured. Consequently, his labor becomes a drudge and his products become tawdry.

As correctives for these evils, certain constructive proposals are suggested. The distortion that has been produced in fine art can be repaired by surrendering the modern doctrine of expression, with its emphasis on the individuality of the artist, and returning to the classical view that art is symbolic and representative, with the emphasis here placed on the meaning and function that the work of art has for common-sense and ordinary purposes. If art is to be made influential for the mass of men, it must be assimilated to the objects and processes that they habitually use. In these terms, art can serve two ends: it can design and make

things that will be efficient tools; and it can represent to human perception the world as this really is. The differences and connections between these views are not explored by the author, and art is treated sometimes as one of them, sometimes as the other; the assumption seems to be that good art should be both, though it might be argued that it is just in specializing into one or the other of them that art attains its greatest refinement and effectiveness. It seems to be the author's view that art should be both a symbol and a tool: to serve man well, the work of art must become again an icon, a central figure in a familiar and well-understood ritual.

The sociological proposals are summed up in the argument that the artist and the worker must be re-absorbed into the craftsman. For the artist, this means that much of his vaunted freedom is to be taken from him, and he is to be held responsible to society for the nature and effects of his work. For the worker, it means that he is to be given a dominant voice in determining the formal structure of his products and the steps of the process of manufacture, and so is to become again a responsible agent and not a passive employee. Of course, the implications of this suggestion are broad: manufacture for profit must give way to manufacture for use, owners must serve as well as possess, and economic and technical direction are to be vested in the organized body of craftsmen. Thus and only thus, it is argued, can we return dignity and satisfaction to the daily work of men: by making sure that they understand and approve the ends they are serving, and practice with enjoyed skill the operations that produce them.

In commenting upon these theories and proposals, the remark that most obviously suggests itself is that they constitute a nostalgia for mediaevalism and nothing more. But Mr. Coomaraswamy expressly denies this, and there is actually no valid evidence for the charge. It is quite true that the book calls for the revival of certain artistic and human values that were much cultivated in mediaeval society; but the author is correct in insisting that this is not at all tantamount to a return to the social organization and practices of the Middle Ages.

However, it should be mentioned that Mr. Coomaraswamy, in his revulsion from the artistic and economic principles of modernity and in his espousal of those values of art and life that were prominent features of the past, has perhaps not kept a completely balanced perspective. Specifically, I think that he overlooks much of good that has flowed from the modern treatment of art and labor, and that he neglects or minimizes some evils that were in the past an accompaniment of the values he cherishes. Admitting the short-comings of the present, it is still true that much has been done to increase the independence, the privacy, and the opportunity open to both the artist and the workman; if these have been abused in some cases, that is no more than is to be expected in human affairs. Likewise, when we pay deference to the past for the values it promoted, we should remember the traditionalism and the general social pressure that must have weighed heavily on many craftsmen. In heeding Mr. Coomaraswamy's criticisms, which are usually pertinent, we should be at pains not to lose the goods of the present nor to invite the ills of the past.

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THE SURVIVAL OF WESTERN CULTURE by Ralph Tyler Flewelling.
Harper and Brothers, 1943. Pp. xv + 304. \$3.00.

Dr. Flewelling proposes his new "quantum view of history" as an answer to the pessimistic Spenglerian cyclical view. His work, which is basically optimistic, contains a valuable criticism of many widely accepted modern "faiths"—as materialism, scientism, impersonalism, and determinism. Like the now discredited evolutionism, this "quantum view of history" is an application to history of the latest findings in the field of physical science. It consequently suffers from the same shortcomings as does Spencer's "social Darwinism" or the current "relativism" in history writing.

There are many points in Dr. Flewelling's book that deserve approval, and there are many more that command only sympathy. But there is no doubt that the book fails of its purpose. For unless the reader has already rejected Spengler's philosophy of history, he will still hold it when he has finished *The Survival of Western Culture*. The Spenglerian thesis can be disproved, but this book does not do it. Dr. Flewelling does not know enough historical data nor does he possess the historical sense required for the task he assumes.

The author seeks to explain Western history as a linear development toward personal freedom. All great developments in the Western world tended toward the emancipation of the human person, till today man has reached "the end of the lower trail." In this "hour of decision" Western man must decide whether he will go forward to the higher trail. The spirit of freedom will survive, the author believes, if it reaches "up into the moral" and partakes "of the spiritual." He concludes that we are now being freed from "materialistic dogmas which were hostile to a true appraisal of humanity." And thus he concludes that "the genius of her past, the tenseness of her disillusionment and dissatisfactions with material things, point to a nobler and ultimate survival."

The historian objects to *The Survival of Western Culture* not so much for its basic thesis that our way of life will survive as for its bad history. For Dr. Flewelling everything in history stands out sharp and clear. He dichotomizes sharply—and incorrectly—between freedom and authority, freedom and institutionalism, and other such antitheses. Plato, for example, is pictured as authoritarian and Aristotle as democratic. Arithmetic is democratic and geometry authoritarian. The free cities of the Middle Ages were democratic, the Church authoritarian. None of these dichotomies is more than a caricature of the true historical picture, which is always shaded and blended in a thousand ways.

The author also makes the fundamental mistake of seeing the past through the eyes of the present. Thus he talks of individualism in Socratic Greece as though it were the same sort of society as modern California. He talks of "Mary worship" in medieval times as a protest such as moderns might make against an absolute God. He looks on medieval cathedrals as manifestations of individualism and democracy and self-assertion—when they were community projects before they were anything. Throughout his work he invests men of the past with today's rather tattered mentality.

Although the book fails to accomplish its purpose, it is far from worthless. When the author gets to work on the contemporary scene his craftsmanship is much better. He does a good job of pointing out the basic contradictions and fundamental weaknesses in materialism, scientism and like "faiths" still commanding the allegiance of the magazine-reading public. He accepts Max Planck's assertion that there must be a Creator as an Ultimate, Whom Dr. Flewelling makes the sole unifying principle and ultimate director of history.

The reader of *The Survival of Western Culture* will hope with its author that it survives. He will hope with its author, too, that it purges itself of the many cancerous growths from which it suffers today. But he is likely to wonder whether the world he pictures as surviving would be so noble. It would be a world of generous souls, but at the same time it would be a world of confused minds where everything is relative to something else, where no one can find any solid ground on which to plant his feet. *The Survival of Western Culture* is not a bad book. To many it may prove stimulating and provocative. But it would have been a better book if it had not been so ambitious. One who attempts to disprove Spengler and write a philosophy of history must know both philosophy and history.

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LIBERAL EDUCATION REEXAMINED: ITS ROLE IN A DEMOCRACY

by Theodore M. Greene, Charles C. Fries, Henry M. Wriston, and William Dighton. *Harper and Brothers*, 1943. Pp. xiv + 134. \$2.00.

BREAKING THE ACADEMIC LOCK STEP by Frank Aydelotte. *Harper and Brothers*, 1944. Pp. xiii + 183. \$2.50.

The football which is taking considerable kicking around on the educational gridiron today is the too liberally used term, "Liberal Education." All agree—now that conditions make it well nigh impossible to adopt it—that we ought to have it. But what it really is and how it is to be inculcated remain disputed points. And the hub of the difficulty seems to be a lack of clear and definite thinking on the part of those writing the advertising copy for "Liberal Education."

Liberal Education Reexamined suffers somewhat from the deficiency described above. There is much that is admirable in this work, but its lapses at times from proper perspective are very irritating.

Liberal Education Reexamined is the work of four committee members who wrote the book on appointment by the American Council of Learned Societies. Professor Greene, professor of Philosophy at Princeton University, and chairman of the committee, carried on extensive research before the actual compilation, visiting schools in all parts of the country, getting data and opinions. These were then incorporated into a draft by the committee, thoroughly revised and presented to the American Council of Learned Societies for further revision. So the book represents a fair cross section of opinion among secular educators in this country. As such it is tremendously significant. Professor Greene did most of the actual writing of the book.

The method of approach is perfectly logical. The committee asks itself two questions: "(a) Where are we now? What is the present status? (b) Where do we want to go? What are our ultimate objectives?"

We find an answer to the initial question in the first chapter of the book, "Education in America Today," where President Henry M. Wriston of Brown University marshals an array of facts that gives a fair and eye-opening view of the national scene.

Less happy is the answer to the second question. That democracy is a means to "cultivate social and cultural ends" is perfectly acceptable. But to infer that the ideal goal toward which education in such a democracy leads may stop short of a concept which includes man in his supernatural status and with a supernatural end, is to abstract man from his real condition. And the study lays claim to being fully realistic. "Education for a full life," as presented in the book, is based upon a democracy

which revolves about man as man. As such it falls far short of the ideal which Christianity holds out for the ultimate objective in education whether in a democracy or in a monarchy.

Despite the fundamental criticism levelled at this book, there is much that is praiseworthy and well worth reading. It is extremely well thought out, and will more than amply repay the reader who seeks statements of facts, without being too curious about philosophies. The book contains no philosophy, for all its objectives are immediate and not final (despite its avowed quest for "ultimate objectives"), since it studies proximate and not ultimate causes.

Breaking the Academic Lock Step gives a critical survey of honors work as it has been introduced into various American colleges. Professor Aydelotte's endeavors in the past twenty years to improve the American educational system by honors work is well known. This book is a valuable source for information on the different honors programs and the results which they have attained.

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PHILOSOPHIES AT WAR by Fulton J. Sheen. *Charles Scribner's Sons*, 1943. Pp. 200. \$2.00.

In this analysis of the causes underlying the war, the author finds that the war is but an expression on the material plane of a deeper conflict long since being waged on the spiritual plane.

There are two basic philosophies of life engaged in this struggle: the philosophy of might opposed to that of right, the relative opposed to the absolute, the sword against the cross. Freedom, the shibboleth of every nation now engaged in the war, if it is to have any meaning at all, must spring from the right—not from might; it must be rooted in the absolute—not in the relative; its symbol must be the cross—not the sword. Because many have chosen "freedom to do what you please" they have fallen away from "freedom to do what you ought" and the result for millions has been simply "freedom to do what you must."

The message of this book is timely. It must be kept constantly before the eyes of all men, especially during the coming years—lest we fight and die and win for ourselves freedom, but the freedom of the servile state.

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